

THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

2022-2027

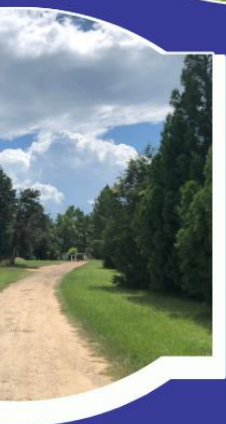
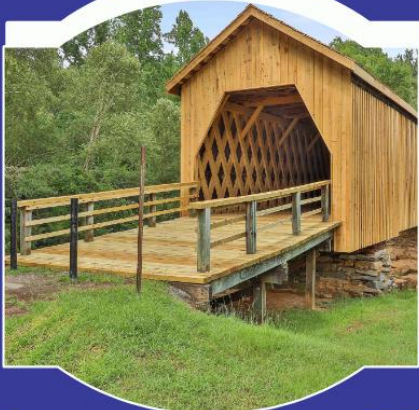


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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the community representatives who contributed to this update. Your significant support through your time and expertise helped form the collaborative vision and action plan to take our region further in economic prosperity.

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**THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
2023 Update**

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been updated for the Three Rivers Economic Development District; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been prepared in accordance with applicable provision of the Economic Development Administration under the Partners Planning Investment Program; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy reflects the goals outlined by the local governments in the ten-county region of the Three Rivers Regional Commission; and

NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the Council of the Three Rivers Regional Commission hereby approves and adopt the update to the Three Rivers Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

ADOPTED this 14th day of December 2023.

**COUNCIL OF THE THREE RIVERS
REGIONAL COMMISSION**



Douglas S. Hollberg, Chairman



Mark Butler
Executive Director

Introduction

Purpose of the CEDS

The purpose of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is to initiate and continue to sustain our local planning and implementation processes that create jobs, foster economic stability, diversify the economy, and improve living conditions in the region. The CEDS is an active mechanism to guide the economic development efforts of the region's diverse and unique communities.

The United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) has designated The Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC) as a federally designated Economic Development District (EDD). The TRRC Economic Development District (TREDD) consists of 10 counties and 43 municipalities. The EDA encourages EDD communities with creative and viable development projects to apply for available program assistance in support of job creation and economic stability. The EDA requires each EDD to develop and maintain a CEDS in order to capture the region's economic development vision and strategies and remain eligible for EDA funding and programs. The CEDS must be updated annually and fully re-written every five years.

This document serves as the full rewrite to the CEDS that was completed for 2017-2022. Annual updates had been provided to EDA for each of the last four years. The Three Rivers Regional Commission Council is designated the CEDS Strategy Committee. This CEDS 2022-2027 will serve as a blueprint for individuals, organizations, local government, institutes of learning, and private industry to work toward regional success and stability.

CEDS Process

This CEDS has been developed through an inclusive planning process that prioritized gathering input through meaningful conversation and collaboration with local and regional economic development stakeholders. Stakeholders conducted the SWOT analysis and updated other strategy components through meetings in both the western and eastern parts of the region to ensure full geographic participation. The TRRC Council is designated the CEDS Strategy Committee.

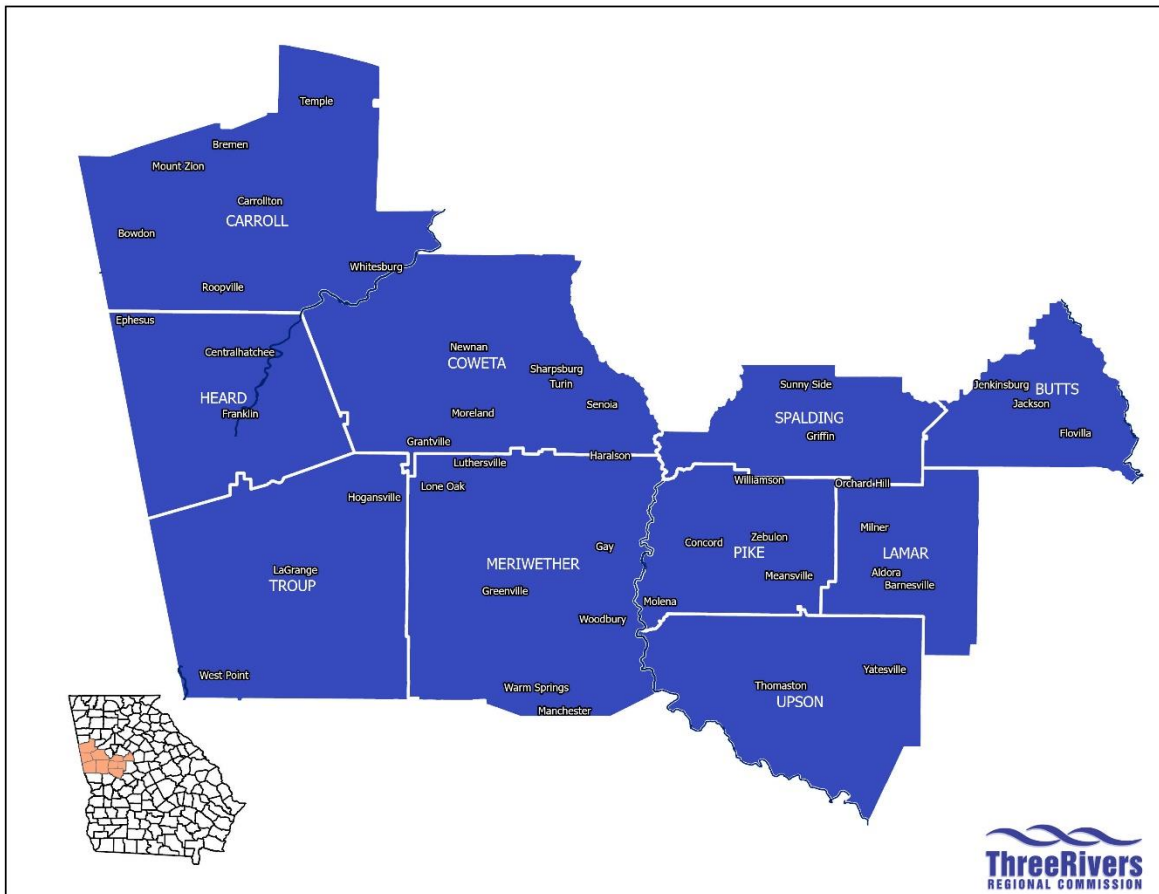
The CEDS was prepared according to the updated EDA rules and policies, and includes the following required components: Summary Background, SWOT Analysis, Action Plan, and Evaluation Framework. The CEDS process also incorporated steps to discuss and document issues and actions related to equity and resilience in the region.

Overview of Region & Summary Background

Three Rivers Regional Commission

The Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC) is a multi-county organization with a membership of 10 counties and 43 municipalities located in central western Georgia. This region consists of rural, suburban, and urban communities, and spans an area of 3,323 square miles. Today over 524,500 people call this region home. The region gets its name from the three major rivers which flow through the region: the Chattahoochee, Flint, and Ocmulgee. These rivers provide much of the region's culture, natural beauty, and overall identity.

TRRC is designated as a regional planning agency charged with the responsibility of implementing the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is also designated as an Area Agency on Aging (AA) with the responsibility of administering programs to serve the elderly. In 2013, TRRC was appointed as the grant recipient and fiscal agent for workforce investment, now known as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). TRRC works to create, promote, and provide technical assistance and services to make the local communities in the region better places to live.



Summary Background

The following Summary Background provides an inventory of the current conditions of the region’s economy to answer the question “what have we done?” in order to determine next steps toward the regional vision. This section includes demographics and socioeconomics to understand the local economic situation and identify key conditions and trends.

Current Population

Just as with the state of Georgia’s trend, the overall population in the TRRC region has been on an upward climb. According to the 2020 Census, the region’s population has grown by 6.98% since 2010. When broken down by county, Butts, Carroll and Coweta Counties are growing at the highest rate. Two (2) TRRC counties are currently experiencing a decrease in population, which include Meriwether, and Heard. Much of the population is geographically dispersed; and the region remains mostly rural outside the population centers of Carrollton, Newnan, LaGrange, and Griffin.

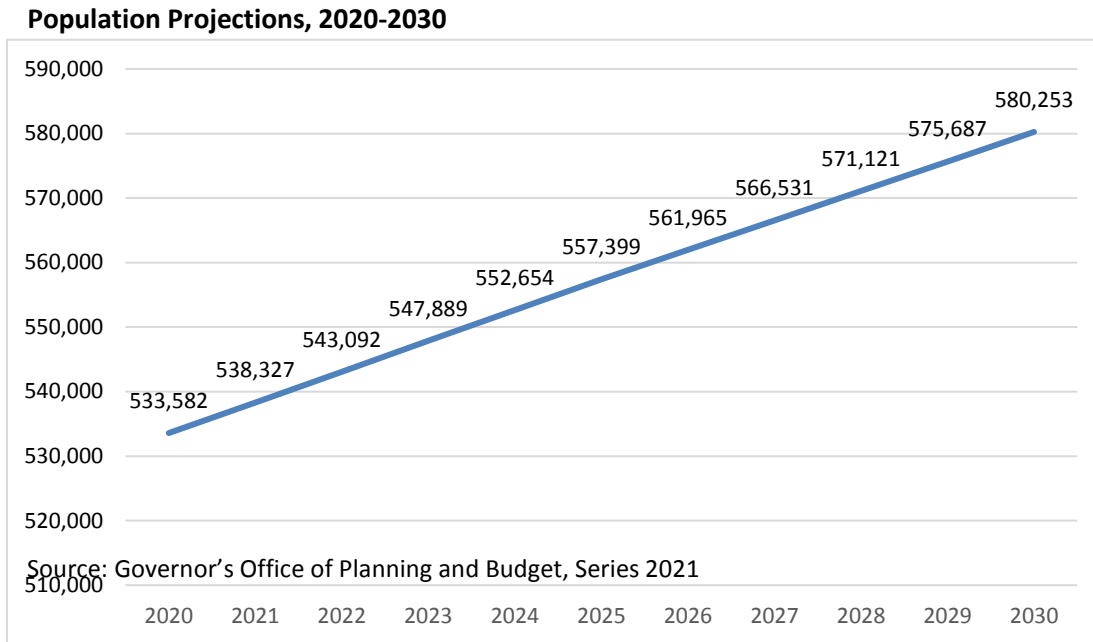
Historic Population Growth in the Region

County	2000	2010	2020	2010-2020 # Change	2010-2020 % Change
Butts	19,522	23,747	25,434	1,687	7.10%
Carroll	87,268	110,667	119,148	8,481	7.66%
Coweta	89,215	127,915	146,158	18,243	14.26%
Heard	11,012	11,837	11,412	-425	-3.59%
Lamar	15,912	18,264	18,500	236	1.29%
Meriwether	22,534	21,830	20,613	-1,217	-5.57%
Pike	13,688	17,918	18,889	971	5.42%
Spalding	58,417	64,066	67,306	3,240	5.06%
Troup	58,779	67,053	69,426	2,373	3.54%
Upson	27,597	27,060	27,700	640	2.37%
Region	403,944	490,357	524,586	34,229	6.98%
Georgia	8,186,453	9,687,653	10,711,908	1,024,255	10.57%

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Projected Population

Per the Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, the region is projected to reach over 580,000 in population by the year 2030 (an 8.75 percent change).



Aging Population

The region has an older population than the rest of the state, with an average median age of 39.5 years versus Georgia’s median age of 36.9 years (US Census, 2020 American Community Survey). The Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget projects the population to continue to age, with the percentage of persons ages 65+ increasing to over a fifth of the regional population by 2030. This increase in seniors impacts economic development in terms of workforce, community services, and the tax base.

Current & Projected Percent of Population Age 65+

Area	Aged 65+ 2020	Aged 65+ 2030
Region	16.49%	21.52%
Georgia	13.9%	19.20%

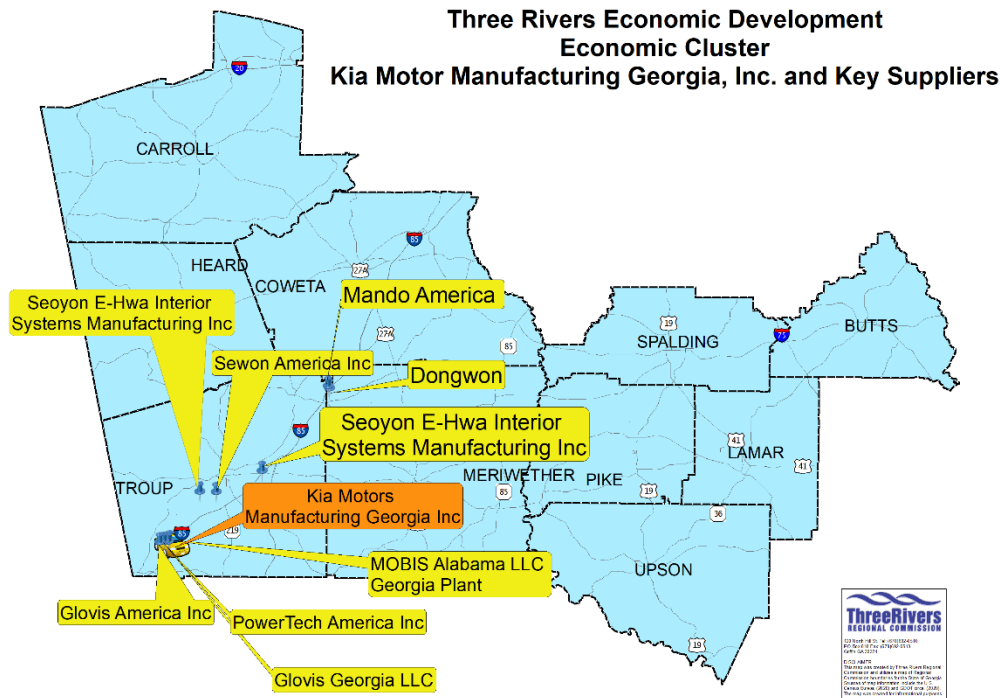
Source: Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget
2021 Population Projections

Industry in the Region

According to the Three Rivers Regional Commission Workforce Development Board Local Plan 2020-2024, the ten-county region is economically and geographically diverse. The region encompasses three interstates, several population centers, and is adjacent to a large metropolitan area with a large laborshed of several million people. The area's economy has a broad range of economic activities and includes several major industries including manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics. Historically, manufacturing has had a strong presence in the region due to the region's textile industry. Since the 1990s, textiles have been replaced by the automotive sector of manufacturing.

Automotive Economic Cluster

The region had a catalytic industrial period when Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia moved to West Point, Troup County in 2009. The state-of-the-art plant, which represents an investment of more than \$1.1 billion, is responsible for the creation of more than 14,000 jobs in West Point and the region. This US assembly plant has been a major asset for Kia, with over 1.5 million vehicles being produced locally.



Blockbuster Film Economy

Additionally, a large number of film production has moved from the state of California to the state of Georgia due to tax incentives, new studio infrastructure, and photogenic outdoor scenery and downtowns. Each county in the region is part of the Georgia Camera Ready Community program and has a local economic development liaison to connect the film industry to local expertise and support.



Developments of Regional Impact (DRI)

In addition to Troup County, both Coweta and Butts Counties have seen major industrial developments in the region. In Butts County, a Dollar General Distribution Center was built near Interstate 75 and a \$205 million new distribution facility was announced in May 2022. In Coweta County, the Orchard Hill Business Park was established to host several large scale businesses.

These projects are examples of Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) that can indicate economic investments and growth in the region. DRIs are projects that are likely to have regional effects beyond the local government jurisdiction in which they are located. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs tracks these projects throughout the state through procedures created between each regional commission and local governments. DRIs have been proposed and implemented over the last 20 years throughout the region, including several over the past year. The below table lists DRI data for this region, indicating a strong current pace of large-scale economic development projects.

DRIs in the Region (2001-2022)

County	Total	# In Last 5 Years (2018-2022)	# In Current Year (2022)
Butts	21	7	4
Carroll	17	5	3
Coweta	48	16	6
Heard	0	0	0
Lamar	6	3	1
Meriwether	5	1	1
Pike	4	0	0
Spalding	7	2	2
Troup	31	12	7
Upson	1	1	1
Region	140	47	25

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Industrial Snapshot

The Industry Snapshot table provides a high-level overview of trends with the region’s industries. Manufacturing has the highest number of jobs, followed by retail trade, health care and social assistance, and educational services. The strong online retail industry has also boosted the transportation and warehousing sector. By 2028, several industries (bolded in the below table) are projected to grow fastest in the region at a rate of 20% and higher.

Three Rivers Region - Industry Snapshot

Description	2018 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2018 – 2028 # Change	2018 – 2028 % Change
Animal Production, Forestry and Logging	4,240	5,220	980	23%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas	80	60	-20	-19%
Utilities	1,170	1,210	40	3%
Construction	7,620	8,080	460	6%
Manufacturing	32,110	35,400	3,290	10%
Wholesale Trade	5,010	5,610	600	11%
Retail Trade	21,030	23,310	2,280	11%
Transportation and Warehousing	6,450	7,790	1,340	21%
Information	1,790	2,070	280	15%
Finance and Insurance	3,280	3,410	130	3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,120	1,210	90	9%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical	2,820	3,380	560	20%
Management of Companies	1,400	1,600	200	15%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	13,290	14,360	1,070	8%
Educational Services	16,870	19,450	2,580	15%
Health Care and Social Assistance	21,770	27,230	5,460	25%
Arts, Entertainment	1,240	1,370	130	10%
Accommodation and Food Services	16,640	18,700	2,060	12%
Other Services	5,950	6,150	200	4%
Government	10,990	11,380	390	4%
Total	184,020	206,340	22,320	12%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, West Central Georgia Industry Projections 2018 to 2028, July 2021

Industrial Growth

As the population continues to age and online sales grow, services geared toward those sectors will increase. The table of the top 20 fastest growing industries shows a significant increase in jobs in the Ambulatory Health Care Services, Social Services, Transportation Equipment Manufacturing and Support Services, and Warehousing and Storage for the period of 2018 to 2028.

Top 20 Fastest Growing Industries, 2018-2028

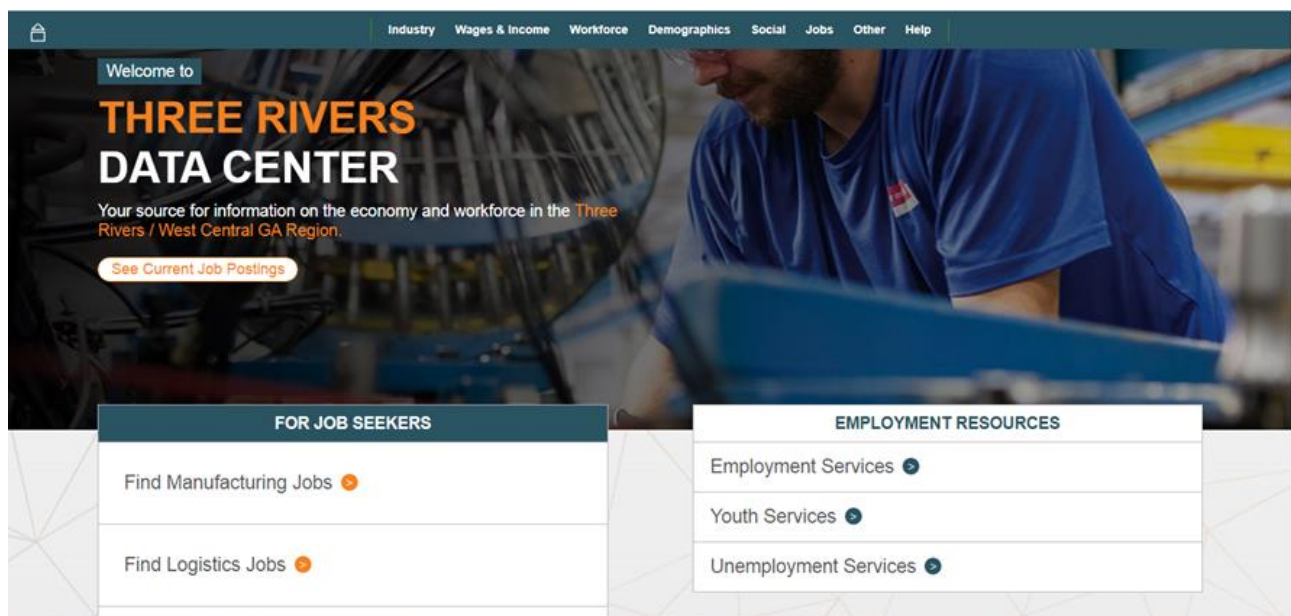
Description	2018 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2018-2028 # Change	2018-2028 % Change	Projected Annual Growth Rate
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	9,650	12,250	2,600	26.90%	2.40%
Educational Services	16,870	19,450	2,580	15.30%	1.40%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	7,070	9,210	2,140	30.60%	2.70%
Hospitals	8,620	10,740	2,120	24.50%	2.20%
Food Services and Drinking Places	15,570	17,610	2,040	13.10%	1.20%
General Merchandise Stores	5,580	6,710	1,130	20.10%	1.90%
Social Assistance	3,170	4,210	1,040	32.70%	2.90%
Crop Production	3,680	4,670	990	26.80%	2.40%
Administrative and Support Services	13,010	13,980	970	7.50%	0.70%
Warehousing and Storage	2,650	3,340	690	26.10%	2.30%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	7,120	7,760	640	9.00%	0.90%
Primary Metal Manufacturing	3,000	3,630	630	21.10%	1.90%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,820	3,380	560	19.60%	1.80%
Food and Beverage Stores	4,110	4,630	520	12.60%	1.20%
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	2,160	2,440	280	11.80%	1.10%
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	2,280	2,560	280	12.20%	1.20%
Construction of Buildings	1,650	1,910	260	15.70%	1.50%
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	1,970	2,230	260	13.80%	1.30%
Support Activities for Transportation	990	1,240	250	26.10%	2.30%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	2,310	2,550	240	10.80%	1.00%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,820	3,380	560	19.60%	1.80%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Long Term Industry Projections, July 2021

Economic Development Resources and Initiatives in the Region

The region has many economic development resources to leverage investments to start new businesses, create jobs, strengthen the workforce, revitalize residential and commercial properties, restore downtown vibrancy, and promote tourism and a higher quality of living. Each county in the region has at least one development authority with engaged local leaders and public/private partners, as well as local plans and strategies to prioritize regional success.

The WorkSource Three Rivers program provides job training programs throughout the region and business services to support area employers. The WorkSource program also provides an updated job search and data site for individuals, economic development entities, and partners in the region. This site can also be utilized by employers and community partners to gain more insight in the region by accessing labor market information tools. This site can be accessed at www.threeriversdata.com.



The region's many economic development entities and programs have people and programs that can connect developers, employers, and employees to financial and professional incentives to enable residents and industry to achieve success at an individual and regional level. The state of Georgia is equally committed to being business friendly, and provides a robust website for current and prospective economic development stakeholders to access information on available financial incentives, infrastructure, available properties, and market data. The following table provides an overview of the numerous economic development organizations and partnerships whose mission is to create and strengthen economic development in the region.

Economic Entities and Programs in the Region

Economic and Industrial Authorities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butts County Development Authority • Butts, Henry, Lamar, and Spalding County Joint Development Authority • Carrollton Payroll Development Authority • Coweta County Development Authority • Coweta, Fayette, Meriwether Joint Development Authority • Development Authority of Carroll County • Development Authority of Heard County • Griffin Economic Development • Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority • Hogansville Downtown Development Authority • LaGrange Economic Development Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Street Newnan • Meriwether County Industrial Development Authority • Mount Zion Downtown Development Authority • Newnan Urban Redevelopment Agency • Woodbury Development Authority • Thomaston Downtown Development Authority • Thomaston-Upson County Industrial Development Authority • Troup County Development Authority • Villa Rica Development Authority • West Georgia Airport Authority
Main Street Programs	Georgia Rural Zones
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newnan (Georgia’s Exceptional Main Streets) • Bowdon (Classic Main Street Program) • Carrollton (Classic Main Street Program) • Griffin (Classic Main Street Program) • LaGrange (Classic Main Street Program) • Thomaston (Affiliate for the Main Street Program) • Villa Rica (Classic Main Street) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hogansville • Thomaston • Villa Rica • West Point • Woodbury
Chambers of Commerce	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butts County Chamber of Commerce • Carroll County Chamber of Commerce • Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce • Heard County Chamber of Commerce • Barnesville-Lamar County Chamber of Commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meriwether County Chamber of Commerce • Pike County Chamber of Commerce • Griffin Spalding Chamber of Commerce • LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce • Thomaston- Upson County Chamber of Commerce
Community Initiatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll Tomorrow • Leadership academies in many counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spalding County Collaborative • Troup County Center for Strategic Planning

Unemployment and Employers

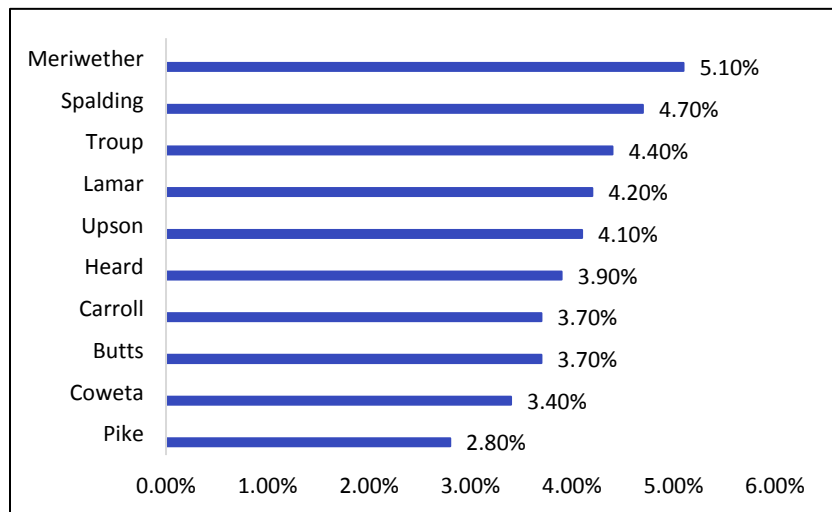
Per the Georgia Department of Labor and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the region has a 2021 labor force of 253,146 people. The unemployment numbers for 2022 are listed in the below table. As a region, the unemployment rate is slightly above the state unemployment rate. As of this period, the rates in Lamar, Meriwether, Spalding, Troup, and Upson Counties were higher the state average. The region has trended toward lower unemployment rates since 2020. The below table shows the top ten largest employers in the region, which include a wide variety of employment from healthcare, retail, education, and manufacturing.

Unemployment Rates

County	2021
Butts	3.7%
Carroll	3.7%
Coweta	3.4%
Heard	3.9%
Lamar	4.2%
Meriwether	5.1%
Pike	2.8%
Spalding	4.7%
Troup	4.4%
Upson	4.1%
Region	4.0%
Georgia	3.9%
US	5.4

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021

Regional Unemployment Rates Comparison



Top Employers

Three Rivers Region - Ten Largest Employers 2022
Hello Fresh
Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia, Inc.
Piedmont Newnan Hospital, Inc.
Security Forces, LLC
Southwire Company
Tanner Medical Center, Inc.
University of West Georgia
Walmart
Wellstar Health System
Yamaha Motor Manufacturing

Source: GA Department of Labor Area Labor Profile updated April 2021

Employer Wages

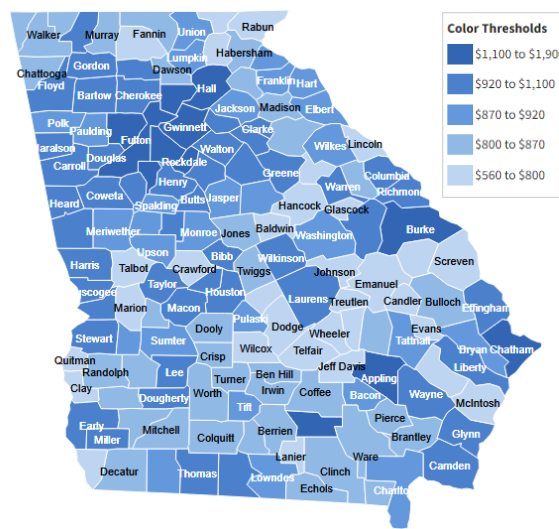
The below graph and map show the average weekly wages paid by employers in each county, the region, and the state. On average, establishments in the region pay a lower weekly wage than the state. This difference can impact economic equity in the region in terms of residents being able to access jobs that afford a stable quality of life. As will be discussed in the commuter behavior section, some residents leave the region to work or can work remotely, but this opportunity is not available to everyone.

Average Weekly Wages by County, Region, State



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4th Quarter 2021

Average Weekly Wages, 4th Quarter 2021



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Occupational Outlook

The following table provides data on the long term occupational projections for the region during the period 2016 to 2026. The top five occupations with the fastest job growth are Personal Care Aides, Nurse Practitioners, Millwrights, Respiratory Therapists, and Software Developers will all experience a higher than 3% annual growth rate over the period. Two out of these top five occupations do not require a college degree.

Top 20 Fastest Growing Occupations, 2018-2028

Description	2018 Jobs	2028 Jobs	2018-2028 % Change	Annual Growth Rate	Typical Education
Personal Care Aides	2,630	3,930	49.20%	4.08%	High school diploma or equivalent
Tool and Die Makers	90	120	44.19%	3.73%	Postsecondary non-degree award
Nurse Practitioners	280	400	43.26%	3.66%	Master's degree
Respiratory Therapists	170	240	42.33%	3.59%	Associate's degree
Physical Therapists	160	220	40.76%	3.48%	Doctoral or professional degree
Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretaker	120	170	39.52%	3.39%	High school diploma or equivalent
Engineers, All Other	120	170	37.10%	3.21%	Bachelor's degree
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	520	710	37.14%	3.21%	Associate's degree
Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	40	60	35.71%	3.10%	Doctoral or professional degree
Purchasing Managers	50	70	34.00%	2.97%	Bachelor's degree
Medical Assistants	680	900	33.43%	2.93%	Postsecondary non-degree award
Agricultural Equipment Operators	190	250	33.33%	2.92%	Postsecondary non-degree award
Operations Research Analysts	50	70	32.00%	2.82%	Bachelor's degree
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	100	130	30.39%	2.69%	Associate's degree
Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line	80	100	30.26%	2.68%	Postsecondary non-degree award

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Long Term Occupational Projections, October 2020.

Income of Residents in Region

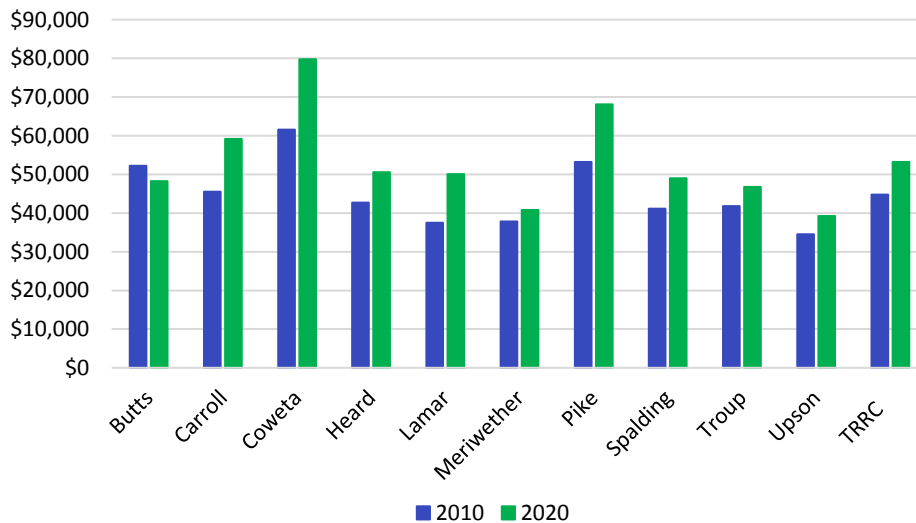
Despite the higher rates of employment in the region, these workers are not earning as much as workers in other parts of the state and country. As indicated in the below tables, the median household income of the region has increased over the last decade, but is still lower than the larger geographies. Overall, the region’s median income is \$8,000 less than the state’s, which can affect residents’ capacity to afford housing, food, transportation, and other daily life expenses. Butts County is the only county in the region to have a decreased median income, though economic development stakeholders in that area are actively working to create more employment opportunities. The only counties that close to the state median income of \$61,224 are Coweta and Pike Counties. Upson County has the lowest median income in the region.

Median Household Income

Area	2010	2020	Change
Butts	\$52,257	\$48,282	-7.61%
Carroll	\$45,559	\$59,197	29.93%
Coweta	\$61,550	\$79,795	29.64%
Heard	\$42,685	\$50,583	18.50%
Lamar	\$37,536	\$50,088	33.44%
Meriwether	\$37,845	\$40,769	7.73%
Pike	\$53,213	\$68,138	28.05%
Spalding	\$41,100	\$48,970	19.15%
Troup	\$41,770	\$46,796	12.03%
Upson	\$34,509	\$39,221	13.65%
Region	\$44,802	\$53,184	18.71%
Georgia	\$49,347	\$61,224	24.07%
United States	\$51,914	\$64,994	25.20%

Source for table and graph: American Community Survey 2010 & 2020

Comparison of Median Household Income: 2010-2020



Poverty in the Region

The TRRC region has a higher rate of persons living below the poverty level as compared to the state. The current difference is 2.62 percentage points higher for the region for 2020, with some counties much higher. Over the last decade, most TRRC counties have trended downward in percentage of persons living in poverty, though Butts County and Meriwether have had increases. The only counties with a lower poverty levels than the state are Coweta and Pike Counties. The below maps display regional poverty distribution.

Percentage of Persons Below Poverty

County	2010	2020	% Change
Butts	16.50%	21.70%	31.52%
Carroll	19.00%	16.30%	-14.21%
Coweta	11.00%	8.80%	-20.00%
Heard	21.30%	19.70%	-7.51%
Lamar	17.80%	15.10%	-15.17%
Meriwether	20.10%	20.90%	3.98%
Pike	12.70%	9.20%	-27.56%
Spalding	22.50%	17.50%	-22.22%
Troup	21.10%	19.60%	-7.11%
Upson	21.30%	20.40%	-4.23
Region	17.02%	16.92%	-0.59%
Georgia	15.70%	14.30%	-8.92%

Source: US Census American Community Survey, 2010 & 2020

Three Rivers Region Poverty Levels, 2010 and 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

Graduation Rate

Regional graduation rates are provided below in the below table. Within the TRRC region, Pike County had the highest graduation rate at 93.9% and Meriwether County had the lowest at 79.2%. There is approximately a 16 percentage point difference from the highest rate and the lowest. This disparity can affect equitable access to economic opportunities in the region.

High School Graduation Rates in the Region

System Name	2020 Graduation Rate (%)
Butts	87.8
Carroll	95.1
Coweta	91.6
Heard	88.2
Lamar	88.5
Meriwether	79.2
Pike	95.4
Spalding	90.2
Thomaston- Upson	88.7
Troup	85.9

Source: Georgia Department of Education, 2020, 4-year Graduation Rates by District

Educational Attainment

The below tables show the post-secondary educational institutions and educational attainment in the region. According to these numbers, 42.5% of the population pursued post-secondary education opportunities. The majority of the TRRC area population, however, has not sought additional education beyond high school.

Education of the Region’s Labor Force (Between Ages 18-65+)

Institution Type	Percent of Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	6.0%	3.2%	3.7%	3.3%	4.7%	17.3%
Some High School	14.7%	20.6%	13.4%	10.8%	13.9%	17.7%
High School Grad/GED	36.8%	39.3%	33.6%	38.2%	38.1%	33.7%
Some College	21.1%	30.3%	24.9%	21.0%	18.7%	14.7%
College Grad 2 Yrs.	5.5%	2.9%	6.8%	7.0%	6.1%	3.3%
College Grad 4 Yrs.	10.5%	3.7%	13.4%	13.3%	11.2%	7.8%
Post Grad Studies	5.4%	0.2%	4.3%	6.4%	7.4%	5.5%

Note: The “Some College” category represents workers with less than two years of college and no degree.
Source: US Census Bureau – 2010 Decennial Census. Georgia Department of Labor Area Labor Profile, August 2022.

Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities

As seen in the below table, the TRRC region has several post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, and technical colleges. The Technical College System of Georgia has been proactive in working with high schools and communities to provide career training opportunities for residents. The below table provides an overview of the programs that had 100 or more graduating students in 2021. These technical programs are an important part of economic development in the area to ensure that employers and employees are matched with the skills most in demand in the area and future.

Three Rivers Region Post-Secondary Educational Institutions

Institution	Website
Brewton-Parker-Newnan	http://www.bpc.edu/newnan/
University of West Georgia-Newnan	http://www.westga.edu/newnan/index.php
Mercer University-Newnan Center	http://workingadults.mercer.edu/location/newnan
Gordon State College	www.gdn.edu
LaGrange College	www.lagrange.edu
Point University	www.point.edu
West Georgia Technical College	www.westgatech.edu
Southern Crescent Technical College	www.sctech.edu
The University of Georgia-Griffin	https://www.griffin.uga.edu/
University of West Georgia	www.westga.edu

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Technical College Programs with Most Graduates

Program	Total Graduates (2021)
Accounting Technology/Technician and Bookkeeping	159
Automobile/Automotive Mechanics Technology/Technician	159
Business Administration and Management, General	353
Child Care Provider/Assistant	183
Emergency Medical Technology/Technician (EMT Paramedic)	134
Small Business Administration/Management	124
Welding Technology/Welder	131

Source: Technical College System of Georgia

Commuting Patterns in the Region

Residents in the 10-county region commute to places of employment predominantly by private vehicle versus public transportation (US Census American Community Survey 2020). The majority of travel times to work totals less than 20 minutes or 20-34 minutes each way, though the below table indicates that some counties have up to 20% of residents driving more than 60 minutes to and from jobs.

This region’s commuting pattern can affect equitable access to job opportunities for people that are geographically separated from employment centers or lack reliable private vehicle transportation. Although most people in the region have at least one vehicle per household, some counties have higher populations without a vehicle. Additionally, although most people may own a car, the cost of maintenance and fuel can be a significant part of monthly income. The table below includes information on each county’s percentage of the population that does not have access to a vehicle and can indicate potential disparities in economic equity and access to opportunity.

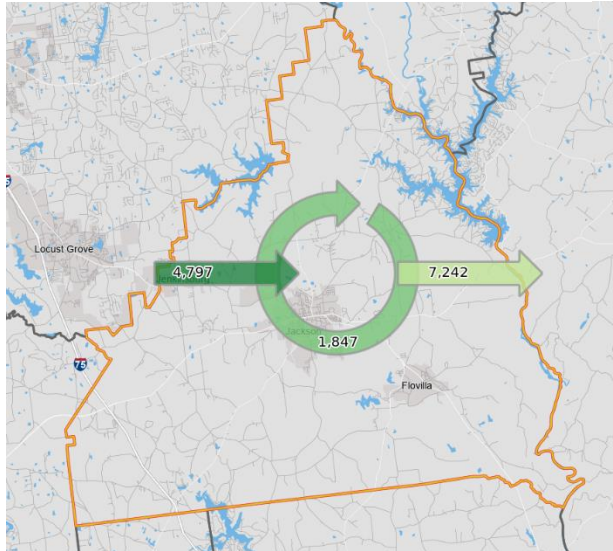
Travel Time to Work (Each Way)

County	Less than 20 Minutes	20-34 Minutes	35-59 Minutes	60 Minutes or More	No Vehicle Available
Butts	34.10%	30.30%	19.80%	15.70%	1.5%
Carroll	37.70%	33.00%	15.90%	13.40%	1.4%
Coweta	32.30%	33.20%	21.70%	12.80%	1.4%
Heard	27.30%	37.20%	18.60%	16.80%	1.5%
Lamar	36.90%	31.50%	11.30%	20.30%	2.0%
Meriwether	25.80%	30.40%	27.90%	15.80%	4.6%
Pike	31.70%	29.80%	20.60%	18.10%	2.1%
Spalding	37.40%	32.40%	17.90%	12.40%	2.0%
Troup	53.70%	27.80%	10.60%	7.80%	4.6%
Upson	56.00%	26.50%	10.10%	7.50%	3.3%

Source: US Census American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2020

Residents in the region commute both within and outside of the 10-county region. The following snapshots indicate that most counties in the region have a high rate of residents that out-commute to jobs in metro Atlanta. Additionally, many jobs in the region are held by people coming in from outside of the region. These ratios of in-commuting and out-commuting may indicate a need for employers and economic development stakeholders collaborate to be proactive to ensure that local industry and the local workforce stay competitive to retain economic opportunity in the region. These commuting patterns indicate many counties in the region are “bedroom communities”, where residents live in the area, possibly due to the attractive quality of life and lower housing prices, but commute outside of the area. This characteristic can affect housing prices within the region, and attention should be paid to the regional housing supply to ensure that people working within the region have access to attainable housing. Note: the following county commuting profiles are derived from the US Census American Community Survey 2020 5-Year Estimates.

Butts County has more residents that commute out of the county to work than stay. Many residents commute out of the region.



Worker Inflow/Outflow

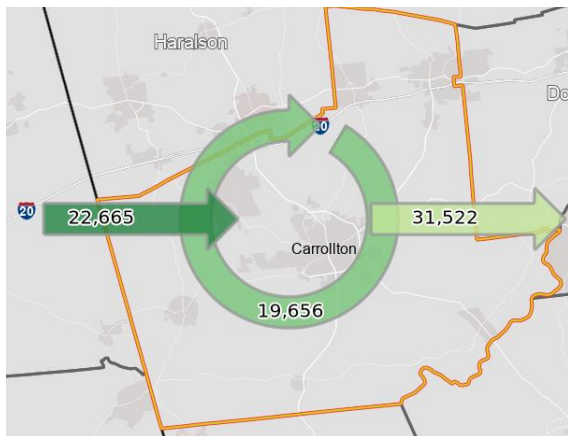
Live and Work in Butts County	1,847
Commute into Butts County	4,797
Commute out of Butts County	7,242

Counties Where Butts Residents Work

Butts	20.3%
Henry	17.3%
Fulton	8.6%
Clayton	6.5%
Spalding	4.7%
DeKalb	4.1%
Cobb	3.1%
Bibb	2.9%
Gwinnett	2.8%
Newton	2.7%
All Other Locations	27.0%

Counties within region shown in blue.

Carroll County has more residents that commute out of the county to work than stay. However, Carroll County has the highest percentage of workers who live and work within the county than any other county in the region. Many residents commute out of the region.



Worker Inflow/Outflow

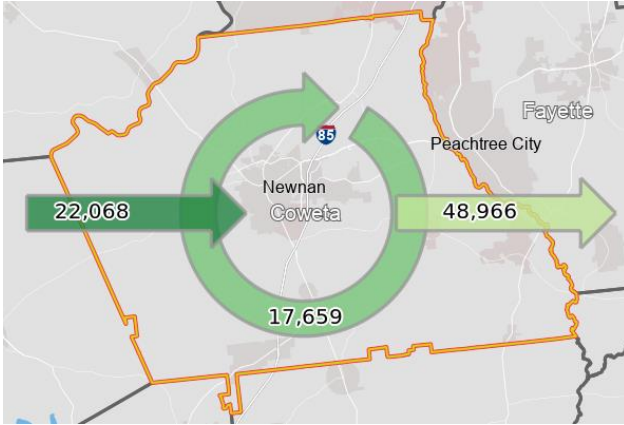
Live and Work in Carroll County	19,656
Commute into Carroll County	22,665
Commute out of Carroll County	31,522

Counties Where Carroll Residents Work

Carroll	38.4%
Fulton	12.4%
Cobb	9.2%
Douglas	6.9%
DeKalb	3.7%
Gwinnett	3.5%
Haralson	3.4%
Coweta	3.0%
Clayton	2.3%
Paulding	1.8%
All Other Locations	15.3%

Counties within region shown in blue.

Coweta County has more residents that commute out of the county to work than stay. Many residents commute out of the region.



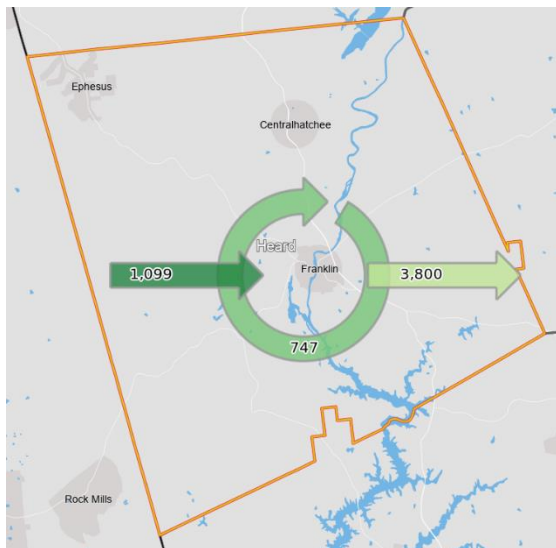
Worker Inflow/Outflow

Live and Work in Coweta County	17,659
Commute into Coweta County	22,068
Commute out of Coweta County	48,966

Counties Where Coweta Residents Work

Coweta	26.5%
Fulton	19.8%
Fayette	11.6%
Clayton	8.6%
Cobb	5.9%
DeKalb	4.7%
Gwinnett	2.8%
Troup	2.1%
Carroll	2.0%
Henry	1.9%
All Other Locations	14.1%
Counties within the region shown in blue.	

Heard County has more residents that commute out of the county to work than stay. Many residents commute within the region.



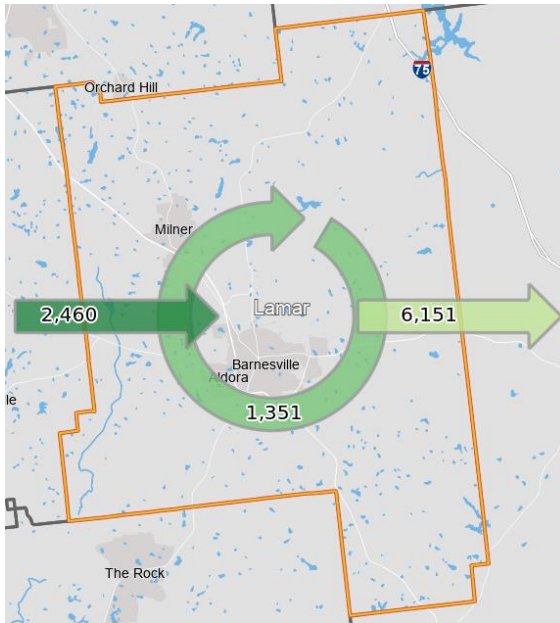
Worker Inflow/Outflow

Live and Work in Heard County	747
Commute into Heard County	1,099
Commute out of Heard County	3,800

Counties Where Heard Residents Work

Heard	16.4%
Carroll	15.2%
Coweta	13.5%
Troup	11.4%
Fulton	7.6%
Cobb	3.8%
Fayette	2.6%
Clayton	2.5%
DeKalb	1.9%
Gwinnett	1.9%
All Other Locations	23.2%
Counties within the region shown in blue.	

Lamar County has more residents that commute out of the county to work than stay. Some residents commute within the region.



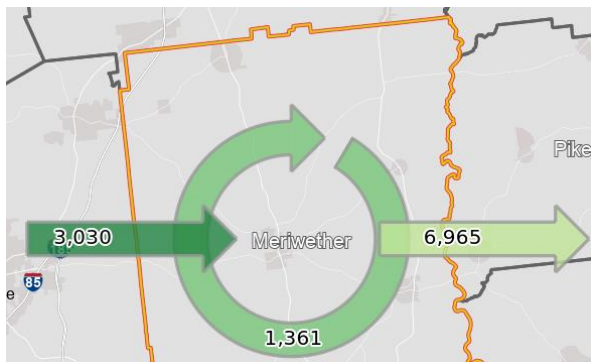
Worker Inflow/Outflow

Live and Work in Lamar County	1,351
Commute into Lamar County	2,460
Commute out of Lamar County	6,151

Counties Where Lamar Residents Work

Lamar	18.0%
Spalding	13.0%
Fulton	7.9%
Henry	7.7%
Clayton	5.6%
Bibb	4.5%
Monroe	3.2%
Butts	3.2%
Cobb	3.1%
Upson	3.1%
All Other Locations	30.7%
Counties within the region shown in blue.	

Meriwether County has more residents that commute out of the county to work than stay. Some residents commute within the region.



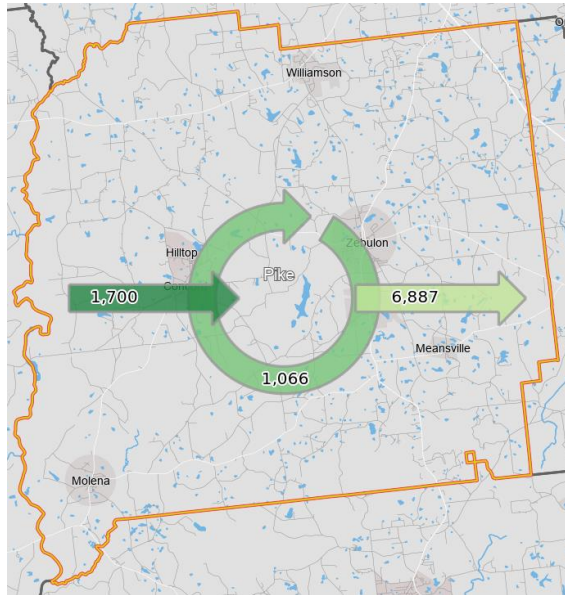
Worker Inflow/Outflow

Live and Work in Meriwether County	1,361
Commute into Meriwether County	3,030
Commute out of Meriwether County	6,965

Counties Where Meriwether Residents Work

Meriwether	16.3%
Coweta	12.9%
Troup	12.8%
Fulton	8.2%
Fayette	6.7%
Muscogee	4.6%
Harris	3.8%
Cobb	3.7%
Clayton	3.3%
DeKalb	2.2%
All Other Locations	25.4%
Counties within the region shown in blue.	

Pike County has more residents that commute outside of the county to work than stay. Some residents commute within the region.



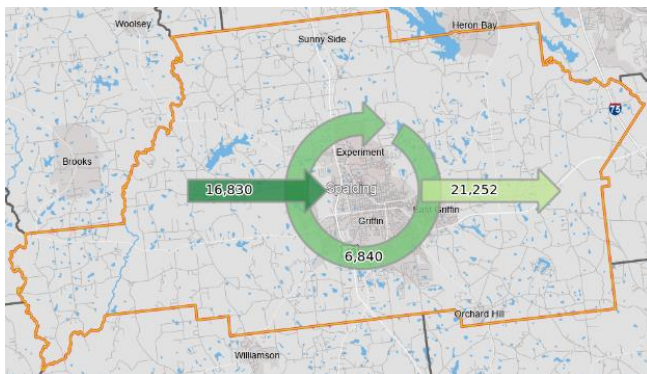
Worker Inflow/Outflow

Live and Work in Pike County	1,066
Commute into Pike County	1,700
Commute out of Pike County	6,887

Counties Where Pike Residents Work

Spalding	17.5%
Pike	13.4%
Fulton	8.8%
Clayton	8.3%
Fayette	7.3%
Henry	6.4%
Upson	4.0%
Coweta	3.4%
DeKalb	2.9%
Cobb	2.5%
All Other Locations	25.6%
Counties within the region shown in blue.	

Spalding County has more residents that work within the county versus commuting outside. Many residents commute within the region.



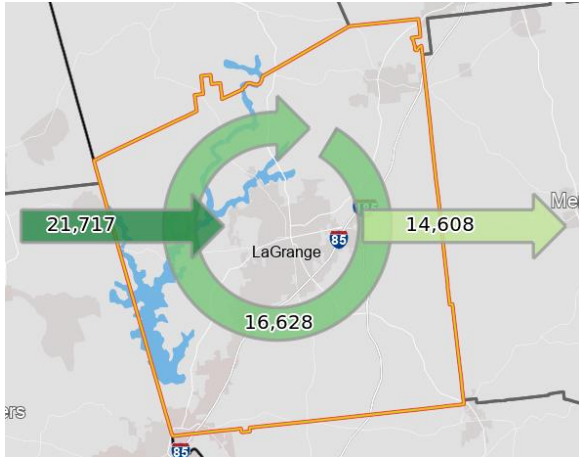
Worker Inflow/Outflow

Live and Work in Spalding County	6,840
Commute into Spalding County	16,830
Commute out of Spalding County	21,252

Counties Where Spalding Residents Work

Spalding	24.3%
Fulton	13.4%
Henry	11.2%
Clayton	7.8%
Fayette	5.4%
Cobb	5.4%
DeKalb	4.9%
Gwinnett	3.6%
Coweta	2.2%
Butts	1.8%
All Other Locations	20.0%
Counties within the region shown in blue.	

Troup County has more residents that work within the county versus commuting outside. Some residents commute within the region.



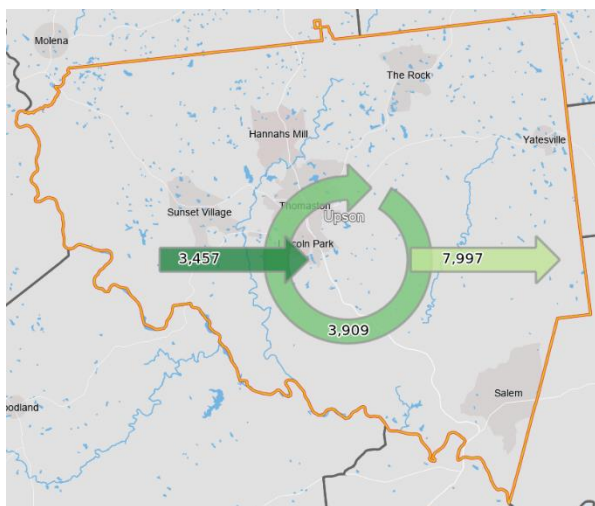
Worker Inflow/Outflow

Live and Work in Troup County	16,628
Commute into Troup County	21,717
Commute out of Troup County	14,608

Counties Where Troup Residents Work

Troup	53.2%
Fulton	5.5%
Coweta	4.6%
Muscogee	4.2%
Cobb	2.8%
Harris	1.9%
Meriwether	1.8%
Gwinnett	1.7%
Lee	1.6%
DeKalb	1.6%
All Other Locations	20.9%
Counties within the region shown in blue.	

Upson County has more residents that commute outside of the county to work than stay. Many residents commute within the region.



Worker Inflow/Outflow

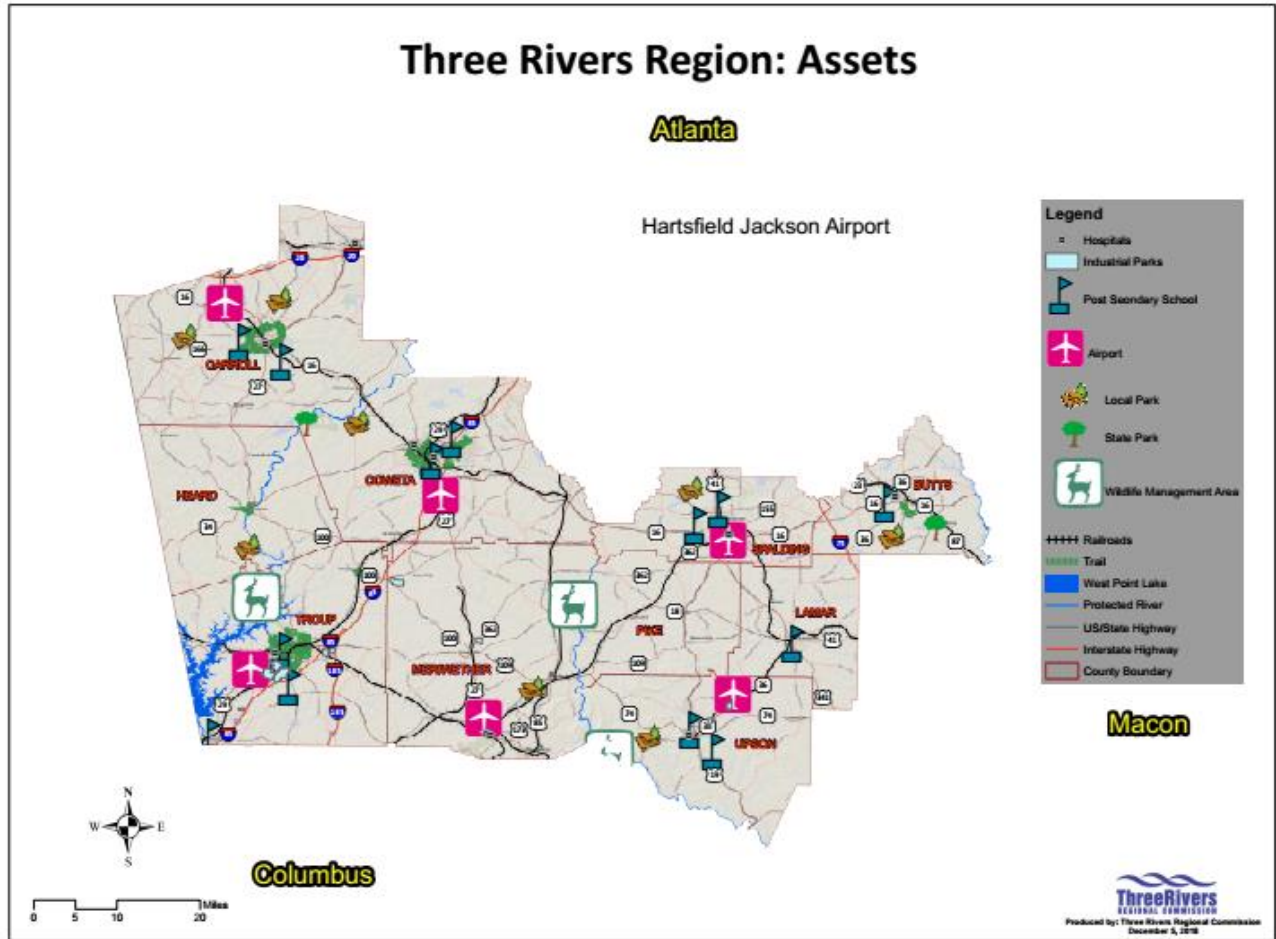
Live and Work in Upson County	3,909
Commute into Upson County	3,457
Commute out of Upson County	7,997

Counties Where Upson Residents Work

Upson	32.8%
Fulton	7.3%
Spalding	7.3%
Bibb	3.9%
Clayton	3.4%
Lamar	3.3%
Cobb	3.1%
Henry	2.8%
Pike	2.8%
Gwinnett	2.7%
All Other Locations	30.6%
Counties within the region shown in blue.	

Community Assets

In addition to numerous educational institutions, the region has other public and private facilities and infrastructure that create economic development opportunities and maintain and improve a high quality of life. These facilities include hospitals, libraries, state and local parks, trails, waterbodies, event venues, and senior centers.



Transportation

The TRRC Region has easy accessibility to nearby major interstate highways; a major international airport, Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL); and an extensive rail freight infrastructure — all providing convenient access to markets worldwide. There is also access to regional airports such as Birmingham International Airport (BHM), Middle Georgia Regional Airport (MCN), Columbus Metropolitan Airport (CSG), and Montgomery Regional Airport (MGM). Local airports also serve the region.

Major Transportation Infrastructure in the Region

Highways:

- Interstates – 20, 75, 85, and 185
- Federal Routes – 19, 23, 27, 29, 41, 78, 84, 341
- State Routes – 3, 5, 7, 8, 14, 16, 18, 22, 34, 36, 42, 54, 61, 70, 85, 87, 92, 100, 109, 113, 154, 155, 166, 173, 190, 219, 362

Rail Service:

- Full-service rail facilities are provided by CSX and Norfolk Southern

Bus Service:

- Greyhound bus service

Truck Lines:

- There are both interstate and intrastate carriers and truck terminals in the region

Seaports:

- Port of Savannah, GA – 280 miles
- Port of Mobile, AL – 270 miles

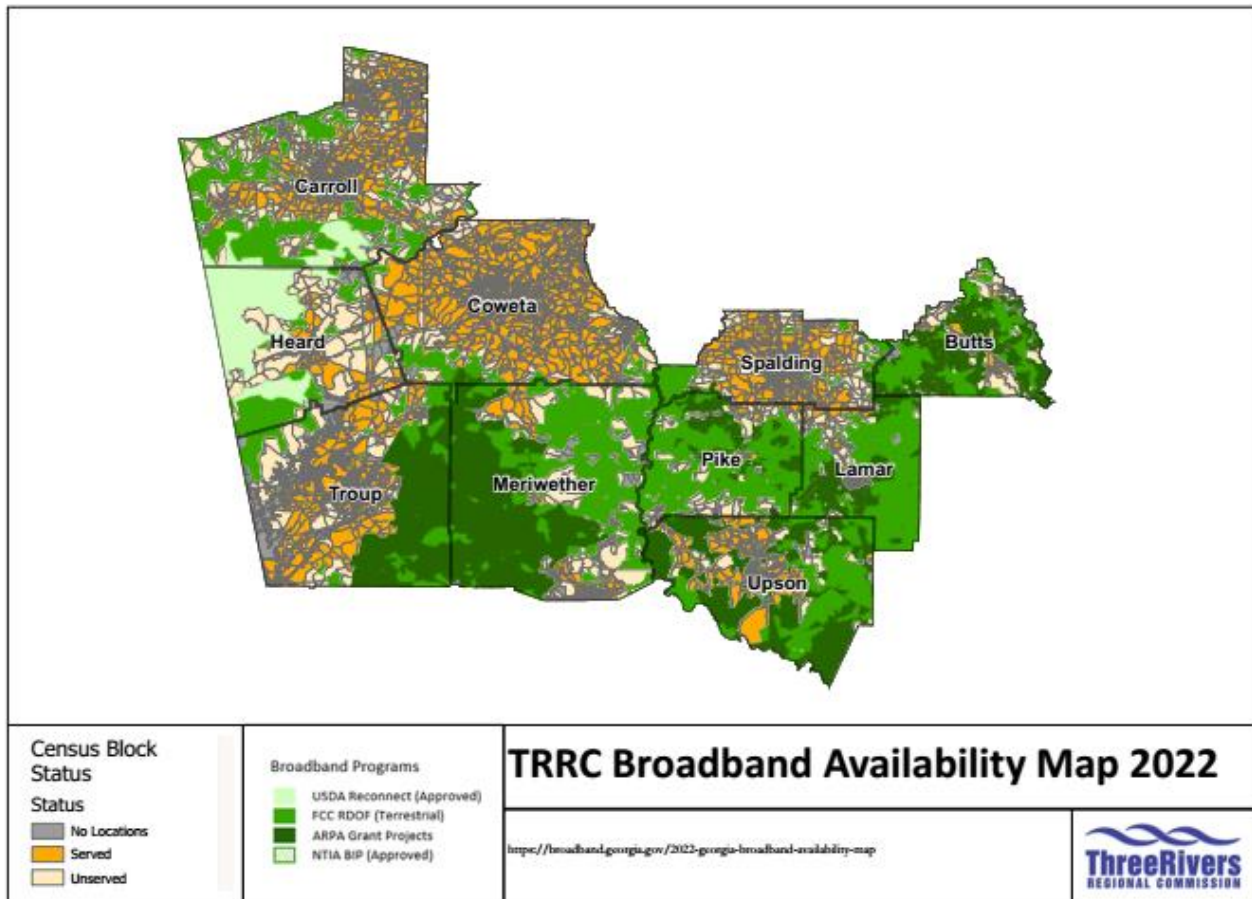
Alternative Transportation Infrastructure

TRRC manages a transit system funded by the Georgia Department of Human Services and the Georgia Department of Transportation. The TRRC transit system works toward mobility equity in the region, providing transportation to the elderly, disabled, and clients in low-income areas who participate in job-training programs. Public transit services are provided on a demand response basis for tens of thousands of trips per year in the ten county service area.

Many jurisdictions in the area are proactively installing sidewalks, multi-use trails, and low-speed vehicle access to increase mobility options for residents and increase transportation equity.

Broadband

Broadband has become essential to business, education, healthcare, agriculture, economic resilience, and overall quality of life. This need has become even more apparent from the COVID-19 pandemic, where a lack of reliable internet can threaten equitable access to educational, medical, and professional resources and opportunities. The region has been actively pursuing broadband funding and partnering with public and private organizations to ensure that high speed internet capabilities are implemented as quickly as possible. These initiatives include programs such as Broadband Ready, or city-wide Wi-Fi in places such as downtown Griffin, Concord, Woodbury, Molena. Special planning and funding has been prioritized for areas in the region that are more rural or underserved.



Regional Vision

Community Discussions and Consensus

This component of the CEDS synthesizes the input gathered from meetings and conversations with community economic development stakeholders. Representatives throughout the region were invited to provide local economic development perspectives and listen and discuss the issues facing people at the individual and organizational levels. This qualitative data is the basis for articulating the region's vision, goals, and strategies.

Consensus Vision Statement

Stakeholders from each county in the region worked to create the following consensus vision statement to plan strategies for the next 20 years:

The Three Rivers Economic Development District strives to increase regional prosperity and economic resilience by being a globally competitive, business-friendly region, comprised of inclusive, safe and healthy communities that sustain a high quality of living for people through all stages of life.

Equity

The region's vision for economic prosperity includes equitable access for economic opportunities for every person in the region. Stakeholders throughout the public and private sectors are committed to reducing disparities in the population related to educational attainment, workforce skills, income levels, poverty rates, health outcomes, business ownership, and incarceration. As discussed during the SWOT analysis, the region has collaboration and initiatives underway to continue to actively understand, address, and improve the barriers to individual success that impact regional success.



Mural in Griffin, Spalding County, GA

SWOT Analysis

Current and Future Factors

A critical part of the CEDS update process was to have stakeholders discuss “where are we now?” and conduct a SWOT Analysis to determine local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in order to identify the internal and external factors that can help or hinder the region businesses from realizing full prosperity.

The SWOT Analysis was an integral portion of stakeholder collaboration to provide input on what factors are affecting jurisdictions on a local basis, and what could be leveraged to achieve regional economic goals. As will be discussed in the following section, the SWOT analysis enabled stakeholders to discuss potential disruptions to the region’s economic base and the conditions that are currently in place, or need to be put into place, to establish economic resilience.

The SWOT factors were grouped into four broad categories that affect long-term economic resilience: human factors, local assets, necessary infrastructure, and business environment. These factors are illustrated by category on the following pages. These factors were further used to answer the questions “where do we want to go” and develop an action plan to work toward economic goals that positively affect the region on a broad scale.

Human Factors

Human factors are those influences that people have on the region's overall economic health.

Local Assets

Local assets are the existing resources, which work to promote or hinder economic vitality.

Necessary Infrastructure

Necessary infrastructure is the result of the physical resources needed to make economic activity happen.

Business Environment

Business environment involves the political and economic climate, which can determine economic vitality.

Human Factors

→ Influences that people have on the region’s overall economic health

Strengths in the Region	Weaknesses in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a laborshed of 3.5 million workers within one hour of the region (per laborshed analysis for Carroll County by the University of Georgia) • There are strong Workforce Development initiatives in higher education • The region has a strong network of senior centers • The region has robust and affordable higher education providers • Education providers collaborate to strengthen educational and career opportunities for traditional and non-traditional students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a large working-age population without jobs • Some working-age people lack a strong work ethic or desire to pursue opportunities • Some workers lack soft skills (e.g. timeliness) • The population is aging, impacting the workforce and requiring other resources • There is an increase in the homeless population • There are drugs and crime issues • There is a high poverty rate • Senior citizens may have a tax burden • Some leadership lacks experience or training • There is a “brain drain” of youth not moving back to the region • There is a lack of community activities for youth • Generation X was taught that blue collar jobs are less desirable, creating a void/stigma for workers • Citizens are apathetic about engaging in local issues due to lack of time, interest, connection • Some areas have low graduation rates
Opportunities in the Region	Threats in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education providers can continue to work match curriculum and programs to workforce needs • Connect leadership to training and education • Encourage veterans to get more involved in community leadership • Workforce Development and education providers can continue to promote trade jobs • State legislators can champion the region • Communities can better utilize the services of the Regional Commission • Create more youth leadership opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The baby boomer generation is retiring (over 10,000 people per day) • Generation X is a smaller population to replace retirees • Generation X and the Millennial generation may not have the same leadership and communication skills and styles as more senior workers, causing friction and gaps • There is a lack of financial and other support for caregivers • Automation within industry can displace jobs or require training • Drug dependency continues to increase • Terrorism • Cyber-attacks • Pandemics

Local Assets

→ Existing resources which work to promote or hinder economic vitality

Strengths in the Region	Weaknesses in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region has multiple vibrant downtowns, including several cities that are part of the Georgia Main Street program and the Rural Zone program • There are many faith-based and community non-profit organizations • There is a strong film industry presence • The region boasts many historic resources • The region has appealing tourism assets, including ecotourism • The region has recreation and leisure activities for residents and tourists • Sustainable agriculture is growing in the region • Healthcare facilities are growing in the region • There is a high quality of life in the region • Many places in the region have retained a small town feel that people desire • There is a growing network of trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of senior housing • There is a lack of affordable housing, including multifamily housing • Historic buildings and places are deteriorating or being demolished • There is limited rural healthcare • The Regional Commission is not fully utilized • Not all downtowns have natural focal points, like a waterbody • Residents and decision-makers do not always support multifamily housing in a jurisdiction • The majority of new homes being built are single-family homes despite only a small percentage of the population being 2-parent families with children at home
Opportunities in the Region	Threats in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region is not yet built-out, there is still time to plan ahead of the growth that is coming • Zoning ordinances and development guidelines can be strengthened to create quality growth • Continue to expand trail systems, including rail to trail or rail with trail • Expand blue trails for outdoor recreation • Create more historic districts • Expand access to health care • Market the region’s high quality of life to prospective residents and industry • Implement creative senior living initiatives and programs, including ways to age-in-place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprawl is moving south and within the region from metro Atlanta • Housing inventory is tight and prices are rising, threatening affordability • Affordable land is decreasing in availability • Development can impact air quality, water quality, and climate • Development can impact community character • NIMBYism can be an obstacle to creating diverse housing choices • New development, such as neighborhoods and businesses, can decline over time

Necessary Infrastructure

→ The result of the physical resources needed to make economic activity happen

Strengths in the Region	Weaknesses in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many areas have rail access • Some areas have multi-modal transportation, such as bike/pedestrian trails and transit • The Three Rivers Regional Transit System offers on-demand transportation that prioritizes low-income, elderly and disabled people • The region’s local governments have prioritized service delivery strategies for residents • The region is between several military bases that might be part of highway improvement plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of senior housing • Some areas lack broadband access • There is a lack of progress on the Import/Export Highway • Infrastructure is not always strategically planned with growth
Opportunities in the Region	Threats in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region is not yet built-out, there is still time to be strategic with planning for infrastructure and growth • Covid has created Broadband initiatives and funding to ensure there is equitable access • The region can create more multi-modal transportation options through trails, transit, and planning for walkability • Transportation safety can be improved through design and education countermeasures • More rail spurs can be initiated to increase local industry access • Road and rail projects can provide more logistics support for freight, trucking, and industry at all points of the supply chain • Pursue inland port projects to diversify industry logistics options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprawl can undermine strategic infrastructure planning • Freight and logistics bottlenecks if there is not adequate road/rail capacity • Many areas such as I-20 and other communities in the region have major growth pressure, can increase infrastructure demands on local governments • Infrastructure has longterm costs that can outpace budgets and jeopardize local resiliency

Business Environment

→ The political and economic climate, which can determine economic vitality

Strengths in the Region	Weaknesses in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic clusters (e.g. auto manufacturing, food processing, healthcare, education) • Development permitting process faster than metro Atlanta • There is still room for growth and expansion • The region has many vibrant downtowns • Close access to Hartsfield Jackson airport • Diversity of industry • Direct route to the port of Savannah • There is still time to be proactive with planning for development • Regional government cooperation • Business support from state elected officials and representatives • Strong local leadership • Strong local economic development community, including chambers of commerce and development authorities • Collaboration with educational institutions to strengthen workforce capacity and opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has not been strong branding to market the region as a destination • There are conflicting pro-growth versus anti-growth mentalities in the region • Cyber-security can be challenging
Opportunities in the Region	Threats in the Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The region is close to metro Atlanta and other major economic centers • Can grow economic development through business hubs and incubators • There are recent opportunities for federal and state infrastructure funding • There is potential to market the region in terms of themes that connect all 10 counties, such as trails • Strive for a holistic economy that works toward a cradle-to-grave concept that prioritizes limited waste, innovation, and sustainability • There is growth potential in logistics centers, wholesaling and distribution facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development is coming quickly, there is limited time to plan • Focus on quality design can increase costs • Weaknesses in the supply chain, more industry is needed for resilience • Developers, especially national and large-scale companies, use minimal site/building design • Development can impact stormwater • Shortage in housing inventory increases prices and drives an investors' market • More technical graduates needed to fill jobs • The decentralization of the workplace puts increased pressure on rural areas • Aging population creates financial burdens • Lack of taxpayer revenue • Local elections and turnover • Conflicts over water resources • Coal restrictions • Terrorism and cyber-attacks • Pandemics

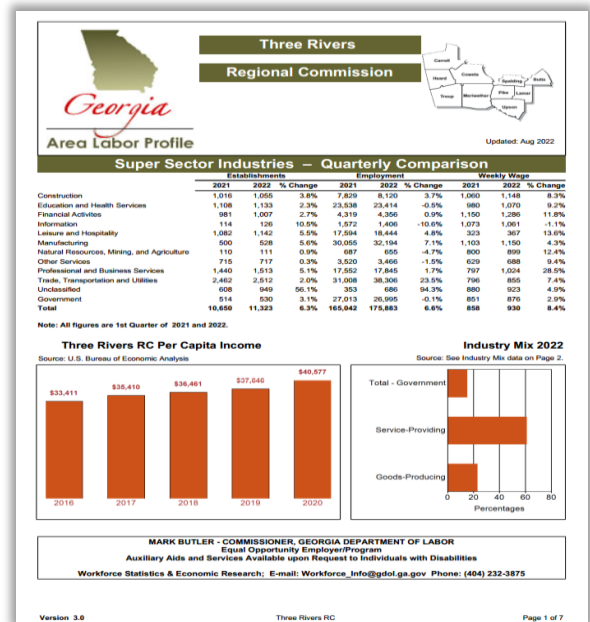
Economic Resilience

This SWOT analysis enabled stakeholders to think critically about what destabilizing forces could threaten the regional economy. Many of the people involved in this update have first-hand knowledge of the economic shocks that have hit the region over the last few decades, including shifts in industry, changes in the workforce, disruptions in consumer and producer behavior, and natural threats. Discussions focused on what capacity is in place or should be bolstered to ward off longterm downturns. This capacity to respond includes both steady-state initiatives as well as responsive economic resilience initiatives.

Steady-State Initiatives

Many local leaders can recall and helped navigate the region through challenges such as the loss of local textile manufacturing in the late 20th century and the housing recession in the first part of the 21st century. The region has also been confronted with damaging natural disasters and more recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic. Economic development and community stakeholders have implemented long-term efforts over the last several decades to withstand transitions and disruptions, including: Prioritizing the agricultural sector: planning to maintain the necessary agricultural land, workforce, tools, and technology to keep the region’s strong farming legacy viable.

- Maintaining a variety of industries and industrial capabilities: local leaders continue to seek and create unique industrial clusters through active recruitment and strategic infrastructure investments. The state and region continually partner on economic outreach, such as maintaining easy-to-access economic profiles and information.
- Preparing the workforce to meet the evolving needs of local employers: economic development stakeholders collaborate closely with regional educational leaders to implement programs that build a resilient workforce that can respond to shifts in industry and technology.
- Establishing broadband networks throughout the region: initiatives include a priority on rural areas to protect and increase economic capabilities and equity.
- Enhancing policies, codes, and standards.



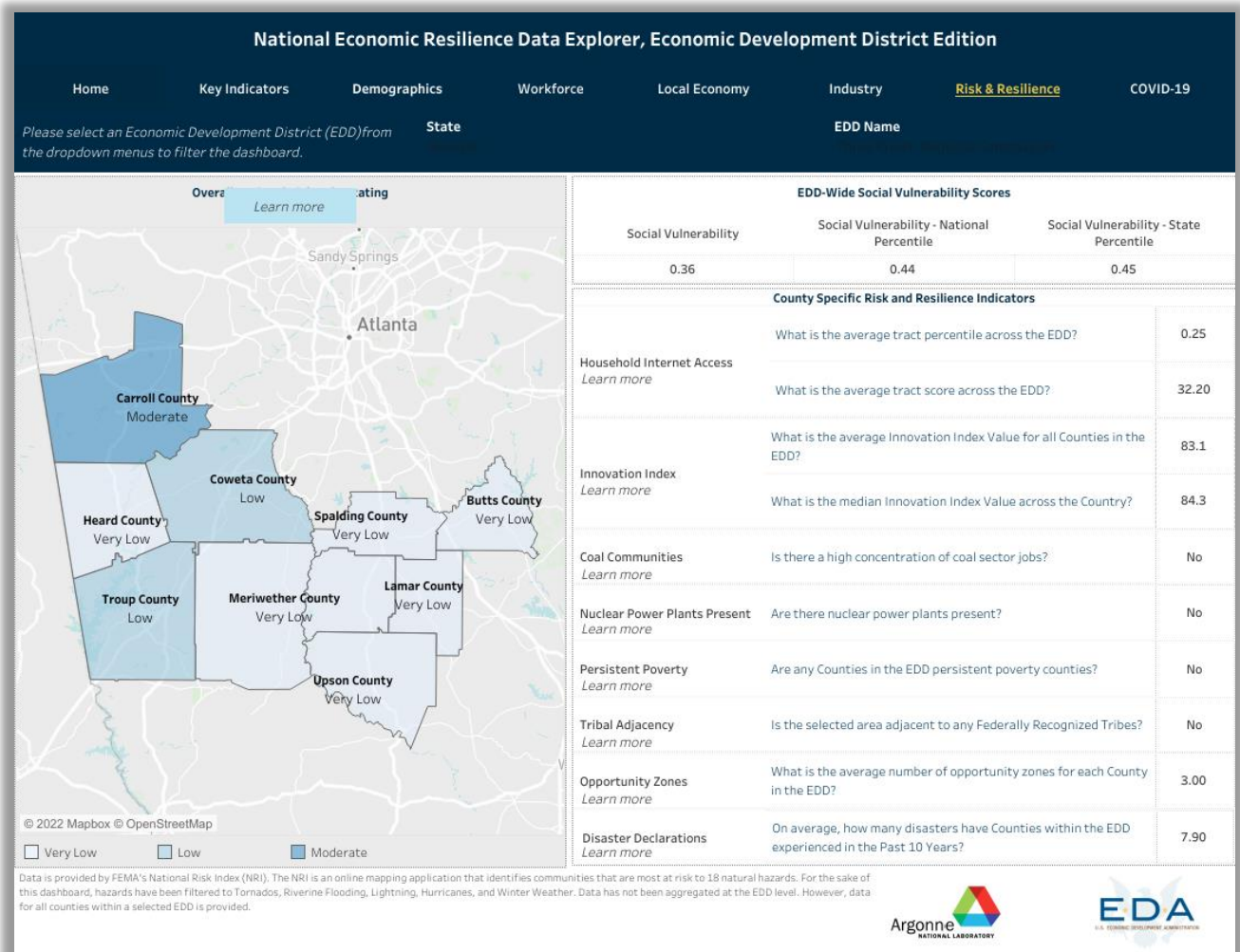
Pictured Above: Quarterly Area Labor Profile produced by the Georgia Department of Labor to provide an economic snapshot for the region’s current and prospective industrial stakeholders.

Responsive Initiatives

Unfortunately, no region is immune from major disruptions, and the ability to quickly stabilize the area’s social, natural and economic resources is key to local resilience. The region has many major storms that have caused significant disruption to public and private facilities, infrastructure, services, and daily life needs.

The below map was created to illustrate resilience data for the region using the National Economic Resilience Data Explorer. Although this map does not register any counties in the region as high on the National Risk Index, the data show that risks exist in the region and strategies must be put in place to respond to natural and manmade disruptions.

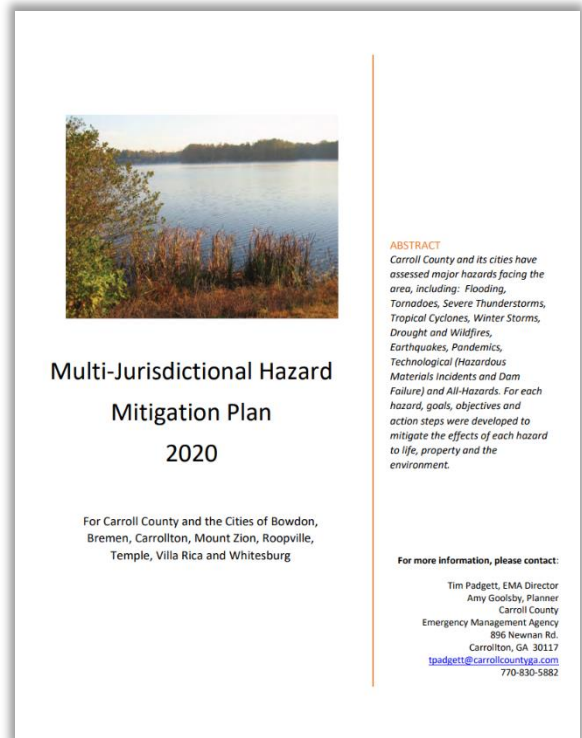
Communities can use this data platform to take action to reduce specific risks in the community and region, as well as to learn about risks and resilience planning throughout the state and nation.



Responsive Initiatives (Continued)

Economic development stakeholders have been instrumental in implementing initiatives to respond to and help the region recover from incidents, including:

- Collaborating with local jurisdictions to plan for disaster response and quickly putting measures into place to get communities back on track. Each county in the region has outreach for local preparedness and recovery. Many counties have Community Emergency Response Teams, Hazard Mitigation Plans, and StormReady Certification in place.
- Support and participate in national and statewide programs, such as Ready Georgia from the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security and StormReady from the National Weather Service to guide local communities in taking steps to plan for disasters.
- Proactively addressing infrastructure investments and plans to minimize supply chain impacts for local industry.
- Maximizing technology and information-sharing to leverage local responsiveness for natural or manmade disasters and incidents.
- Prioritizing broadband initiatives in rural and underserved communities to ensure residents and businesses have equitable access to the internet during disruptions.
- Identifying and pivoting to alternative community facilities when buildings or infrastructure are compromised.



Regional Goals and Strategies

The CEDS Stakeholder Committee for the Three Rivers Economic Development District identified the following goals and strategies that are specific to its SWOT Analysis and overall vision.

Goals: Local Assets

The Three Rivers Region is fortunate to contain many natural, cultural and historic resources that make up its identity and contribute to economic vitality. These resources include the three rivers that make up its name, the Chattahoochee, the Flint, and the Ocmulgee Rivers. Historic downtowns and town centers make up the heart of the community and serve as the center of tourism and commercial activity.

Goal: Support thriving downtowns in the region.

Strategies:

- Enhance the aesthetics and availability of public places and spaces, existing downtown squares, and commercial streets.
- Promote quality development that contributes to the aesthetics and scale of the area.
- Encourage mixed use within downtown areas to support commercial and residential vitality.
- Maintain the diverse business representation on local main streets and downtowns.
- Support downtown development and redevelopment through available programs such as Georgia Main Street, Georgia Downtown Association, DCA Georgia Rural Zone Program, DCA Revitalization Area Strategies, and others.
- Support the establishment and re-establishment of downtown development authorities.

Goal: Expand tourism opportunities within the District.

Strategies:

- Utilize the assets in the region and seek opportunities that support and expand natural, cultural, and agri-tourism within the region.
- Promote ecotourism in the region including state parks, local parks, trails, rivers.
- Identify opportunities to expand and passive and active recreation. Partnerships through the Nature Conservancy Trust for Public Land, Georgia Conservancy, Georgia Department of Natural Resources.
- Identify opportunities to create cultural gathering spaces, events, and experiences.
- Implement a regional branding approach to connect visitors to multiple destinations and tourism opportunities.

Goal: Seek opportunities to expand movie and film production within the District.

Strategies:

- Ensure the permitting process for local filming production is streamlined and easily accessible.
- Continue involvement with the Georgia Camera Ready Communities program.
- Maintain and expand film locations and associated support services in the region.

Goal: Promote and protect local identity and sense of place.

Strategies:

- Encourage municipalities to utilize design guidelines and other development codes for commercial sites.
- Protect natural resources through environmental design, easements, buffers and adoption of environmental codes.
- Encourage the promotion of historic and cultural assets through historic preservation techniques including listing properties and districts on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Encourage the enhanced protection of historic places by establishing historic preservation commissions, districts, and overlay zoning.

Goal: Promote quality development, economic resilience, and equity.

Strategies:

- Eliminate economic distress through revitalization and development.
- Encourage the highest and best use of Three Rivers' limited and underdeveloped land
- Seek ways to increase affordable housing for members of our community.
- Create a variety of housing types for people of different incomes, household structures, and life stages.
- Encourage a variety of businesses to provide goods and services in all neighborhoods especially in underserved areas.
- Adopt Tax Allocation Districts (TAD) and Enterprise and Opportunity Zones, and other programs to target strategy projects or district improvements.
- Expand economic opportunities for low/moderate income citizens by targeting reinvestment and utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and other financial resources.
- Prioritize public investments in areas of greatest need and ensure economic development projects are coordinated with local stakeholders.

Goals: Business Environment

Like the State of Georgia, the Three Rivers Region strives to continue to be a great place to do business. Regional governments and organizations should create political and economic environments that promote economic vitality.

Goal: Increase the number of businesses and industries that establish, expand and maintain operations within the District.

Strategies:

- Promote the District as a business-friendly community.
- Promote and map industrial parks and sites within the region.
- Provide incentives to establish new businesses and help existing businesses grow.
- Utilize various funding sources to expand business and industry.
- Promote partnerships with the local small business development centers in the region.

Goal: Strengthen the regional commercial districts.

Strategies:

- Develop a vital mix of businesses within all commercial districts, main streets, and downtowns.
- Build on existing nodes and promote more nodal development of regional centers along highways and where appropriate to promote and create more efficiency, focused development, limited land consumption, and utilization available facilities and infrastructure.

Goal: Promote redevelopment of former industrial areas and plan for the reuse of underutilized buildings.

Strategies:

- Seek funding for brownfield cleanup and hazardous waste removal.
- Redevelop former industrial sites, especially textile mills and warehouses, to reactivate the economic vitality of the area and promote adaptive reuse.

Goal: Promote and expand agriculture in the District.

Strategies:

- Support agriculture education in schools through 4-H and Future Farmers of America programs.

- Promote and support farmers markets.
- Promote extension agencies in the District.
- Support and encourage sustainable and local agriculture.
- Support local food in local schools.
- Protect the availability of farmland through economic incentives and balanced growth initiatives.

Goals: Human Factors

One of the greatest assets to promote economic success in the Three Rivers District are the people that make things happen with innovation and ideas. The region should continue to cultivate business leaders, a well trained workforce, and strive to retain young citizens to stay in the region.

Goal: Create equitable opportunities for individuals of all backgrounds to succeed economically in the region, in turn creating a more prosperous and resilient economy.

Strategies:

- Invest in equitable and inclusive initiatives and partnerships that break down barriers to safe and quality housing, food, education, technology, mobility, healthcare and employment.
- Continue implementing creative partnerships between schools, employers, and employees to promote upward mobility and advancement in the workplace.
- Champion both college and non-college career tracks as important strategies to creating self-sufficiency.
- Ensure the region’s vulnerable and/or underserved populations are included in economic development initiatives.
- Continue to strengthen employment opportunities for populations such as people living with a disability, veterans, homeless individuals, foster youth, dislocated workers, and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Goal: Establish program initiatives, through public and private partnerships, to improve employment skills, including both soft and technical skills, of the District’s workforce.

Strategies:

- Educate students K-12, out-of-school youth, and current and potential workers about the importance of soft skills.
- Encourage public agencies and private industries to work together to find innovative

methods to teach everyday skills of running a business.

- Strengthen mentorships and apprenticeships programs that focus on soft skills and on-the-job training, in particular, by strengthening the role of the College and Career Academies.
- Encourage private industries to commit to workforce development in various community programs that target school-aged youth and assist with the development of career pathways.
- Expand job training for senior citizens in the District.
- Promote workforce development through job fairs, mobile career unit strategies and work-based learning programs.
- Strengthen leadership and soft skills training for employees of all career levels to address generational differences and capture needs and opportunities as people get closer to retirement.

Goal: Increase employment within the District.

Strategies:

- Establish workforce development and economic development strategies for the District and improve resident's access to jobs.
- Match workforce development services to skills needed to serve local business and industry.
- Utilize and promote established workforce development programs to residents.
- Continue to attract and retain a skilled workforce to meet the needs of business and industry in the District.
- Strive to retain workers through upskilling programs for incumbent and displaced workers.

Goal: Expand and improve access to rural healthcare in the District.

Strategies:

- Seek funding for the expansion of rural healthcare facilities.
- Expand mental health and geriatric facilities.

Goal: Expand care infrastructure in the region for people of all ages and abilities to stay economically and socially engaged and self-sufficient.

Strategies:

- Implement solutions for the aging population to age in place, including an adequate caregiver workforce, supportive mobility options, and accessible housing options.
- Expand childcare facilities, operations, and workforce throughout the region to enable parents to work outside of the home.
- Prioritize connecting people of all ages and abilities to social opportunities through recreation centers (for youth, disabled individuals, and seniors).

Goals: Necessary Infrastructure

The District is fortunate to contain needed infrastructure to support economic development such as numerous industrial parks, interstate highways, railroads, airports, water and sewer, and increasing broadband internet coverage. The maintenance and improvement of infrastructure assets will be vital to allow the Three Rivers District to remain economically sound.

Goal: Expand broadband to underserved rural communities and increase opportunities for business development.

Strategies:

- Continue the regional broadband taskforce to identify solutions to gain access to broadband in rural communities.
- Support state initiatives for broadband implementation and expansion.
- Seek various funding sources to help fund the expansion of broadband services to rural communities.
- Increase consumer awareness of the expanded broadband access in rural areas.

Goal: Facilitate achieving economic development goals by the implementation of transportation strategies.

Strategies:

- Encourage local governments to develop, implement, and update transportation plans.
- Coordinate transportation improvements that support access and promote economic development.
- Explore multi-modal enhancements for the District.
- Support safety, walkability, and increased pedestrian access to commercial activity centers.
- Promote the use of overlay corridors along major commercial highways to enhance site design and landscaping.
- Support rail spurs and inland rail ports to expand the logistical needs for business and industry.

Goal: Support the maintenance and expansion of infrastructure to support economic development.

Strategies:

- Assist local governments in identifying and obtaining the needed funding to expand and maintain infrastructure such as water, sewer and electric charging.
- Assist local governments in promoting local commercial sites and site ready development.

Goal: Support the expansion of Georgia’s Export/Import Highway from I-85 in LaGrange to I-75 near to Macon.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with Troup, Meriwether and Upson Counties; the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration to evaluate parallel alternatives to I-20 that provide a direct route across the State of Georgia from the Port of Savannah to West Central Georgia.
- Conduct a corridor study to identify feasible locations and alignment alternatives for a multi-lane highway between LaGrange and Macon.
- Conduct public forums and other citizen involvement strategies to increase public awareness about the economic impact of Georgia’s Export/Import Highway.

Action Plan

The following action plan builds upon the goals and strategies identified through the SWOT analysis, data collection, and stakeholder collaboration to answer the questions “where do we want to go?” and “how are we going to get there?”. The Three Rivers Regional Commission, the TRRC CEDS Committee, local governments and stakeholders are all responsible for implementation of the CEDS goals, strategies, and work program. The TRRC, utilizing Economic Development Administration Planning Investment funds, will assist and guide responsible parties in the implementation of the CEDS. In addition to EDA grant funds, the TRRC will employ the following implementation tools in meeting the CEDS goals:

- Georgia Department of Community Affairs Grant and Loan Funds
- Appalachian Regional Commission Grant Funds
- US Department of Agriculture-Rural Development Economic Development Programs
- One Georgia Authority
- Georgia Recreational Trails Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Federal and state transportation funding

In addition, local and statewide initiatives such as Freeport Exemption, Job Tax Credits, Enterprise Zones and job training programs will be assessed as additional resources to implement the CEDS goals.

The action plan of the CEDS details high priority projects that will have a significant impact on regional economic development. Regional priority projects are documented along with several localized priorities within each county. Each of these action items could be successfully implemented through public/private partnerships and leveraging funding.

TRRC Priority Projects

Entity and Project Info	Estimated Cost and Description	Responsible Party	Jobs Created
<p>TRRC Region: Georgia Import/Export Highway</p> <p>This project proposes the expansion of Georgia’s Import Export Highway Corridor, which spans approximately 80 miles from I-85 near LaGrange to I-75 near Macon.</p>	\$480,000,000	GDOT, Federal Highway Administration	To Be Determined
<p>TRRC Region: West Georgia Broadband Project</p> <p>This project proposes to expand broadband services to underserved rural counties including Heard, Troup, Meriwether, and Upson Counties.</p>	\$1,000,000	West Central GA Broadband Authority	To Be Determined
<p>TRRC Region: Mill Redevelopment</p> <p>This project will redevelop one or more of the many former mill sites throughout the region for housing and economic development, boosting industrial recruitment opportunities, workforce housing, and reducing brownfields and blight.</p>	\$50,000,000	Host Municipalities	To Be Determined
<p>TRRC Region: Trails of Regional Significance</p> <p>This project will support the property acquisition, planning, design, engineering and construction of a regionally significant trail. These trails will be located in conjunction with regionally beneficial assets, such as along the Chattahoochee, Flint, Ocumulgee and other rivers, and/or along abandoned or unused rail corridors.</p>	\$80,000,000	Host Municipalities	To Be Determined
<p>Butts County: Highway 16 Sewer-Expansion Project East of I-75</p> <p>This project proposes to complete sewer on Highway 16, east of I-75 to Colwell Road, both north and south of Highway 16.</p>	\$750,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined

Entity and Project Info	Estimated Cost and Description	Responsible Party	Jobs Created
<p>Butts County: Riverview Business Park/Short Road Gravity Sewer</p> <p>This project proposes to complete construction and paving of the main road in Phase 2 of the Riverview Business Park.</p>	\$600,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
<p>Butts County: Water and Sewer Expansion to Serve Industrial Uses</p> <p>This project proposes the extension of water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate new industrial user's demands.</p>	\$1,000,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
<p>Carroll County: Business/Industrial Park Development</p> <p>This project involves developing at least three 100-1,000 acre parks with required infrastructure to achieve GRAD certification (water, sewer, etcx).</p>	\$50,000,000	Carroll County	To Be Determined
<p>Carroll County: Carrollton/Maple Street Corridor Improvements</p> <p>This project is to add sidewalks, bike lanes, improve streetscape and achieve enhanced walkability and connectivity from Maple Street Commons and the University of West Georgia to US 27.</p>	\$20,000,000	Carroll County	To Be Determined
<p>Carroll County: Villa Rica Industrial Infrastructure Improvements</p> <p>This project involves industrial improvements at Interstate 20 and Liberty Road.</p>	\$2,500,000	Carroll County	To Be Determined

Entity and Project Info	Estimated Cost and Description	Responsible Party	Jobs Created
<p>Carroll County: US 27 Improvements</p> <p>This project involves improvements to US 27 and a potential by-pass at Route 100 in anticipation of the planned West Central Georgia Inland Port.</p>	\$50,000,000	Carroll County	To Be Determined
<p>Carroll County: Maple Street Corridor Improvements</p> <p>This project proposes to add sidewalks, bike/golf cart lanes, and enhanced streetscape and to improve connectivity between new West GA Technical College campus, University of West Georgia Campus, and downtown Carrollton.</p>	\$10,000,000	City of Carrollton, West GA Technical College, University of West GA Campus	To Be Determined
<p>Carroll County: Business Park</p> <p>This project proposes to create a new 500-acre business park and make infrastructure improvements required to be GRAD certified (water, sewer, etc.).</p>	\$50,000,000	Carroll County	To Be Determined
<p>Carroll County: Villa Rica Business Park</p> <p>This project proposes to create a 250-acre+ GRAD certified business park to include water, sewer, etc.</p>	\$20,000,000	City of Villa Rica	To Be Determined
<p>Heard County: Water Treatment Plant Upgrade</p> <p>This project proposes a water treatment plant upgrade that will increase capacity from currently treating 3 MGPD to 4MGPD. It will also replace failing equipment with new and more efficient equipment and add a generator for use during power outages.</p>	\$5,500,000	Heard County and IDA	To Be Determined

Entity and Project Info	Estimated Cost and Description	Responsible Party	Jobs Created
<p>Lamar County: Sewer Infrastructure Plan Implementation</p> <p>Implentation of the Sewer Infastructure Plan to correct sewer infastructure deficiencies that are negatively impacting Economic Development in the community.</p>	\$15,000,000	City of Barnesville	To Be Determined
<p>Lamar County: Legacy Industrial Park Improvements</p> <p>This project will improve infastructure in the Legacy Industrial Park and along Roberta Drive to facilitate Industrial Development.</p>	To Be Determined	City of Barnesville	To Be Determined
<p>Meriwether County: City of Manchester Manchester Community Building Workforce Center</p> <p>This project will revitalize the historic Manchester Community Building to create a regional workforce development and tourism facility for Meriwether, Troup, and Talbot Counties.</p>	\$1,000,000	City of Manchester	To Be Determined
<p>Spalding County: Business Park Improvements</p> <p>This project will improve infastructure in the county’s business park to ensure water and sewer service are delivered efficiently.</p>	To Be Determined	Spalding County	To Be Determined
<p>Spalding County, City of Griffin Multiuse Trail</p> <p>This project will construct a multiuse trail network to create transportation, recreation, and economic opportunities for residents, as well as resiliency and economic development opportunities for the community.</p>	\$50,000,000	City of Griffin	To Be Determined
<p>Spalding County, City of Griffin Business Incubator/Accelerator</p> <p>This project will refurbish and equip a fully functional facility to provide small business development training and support.</p>	\$10,000,000	City of Griffin, Southern Crescent Technical College	To Be Determined

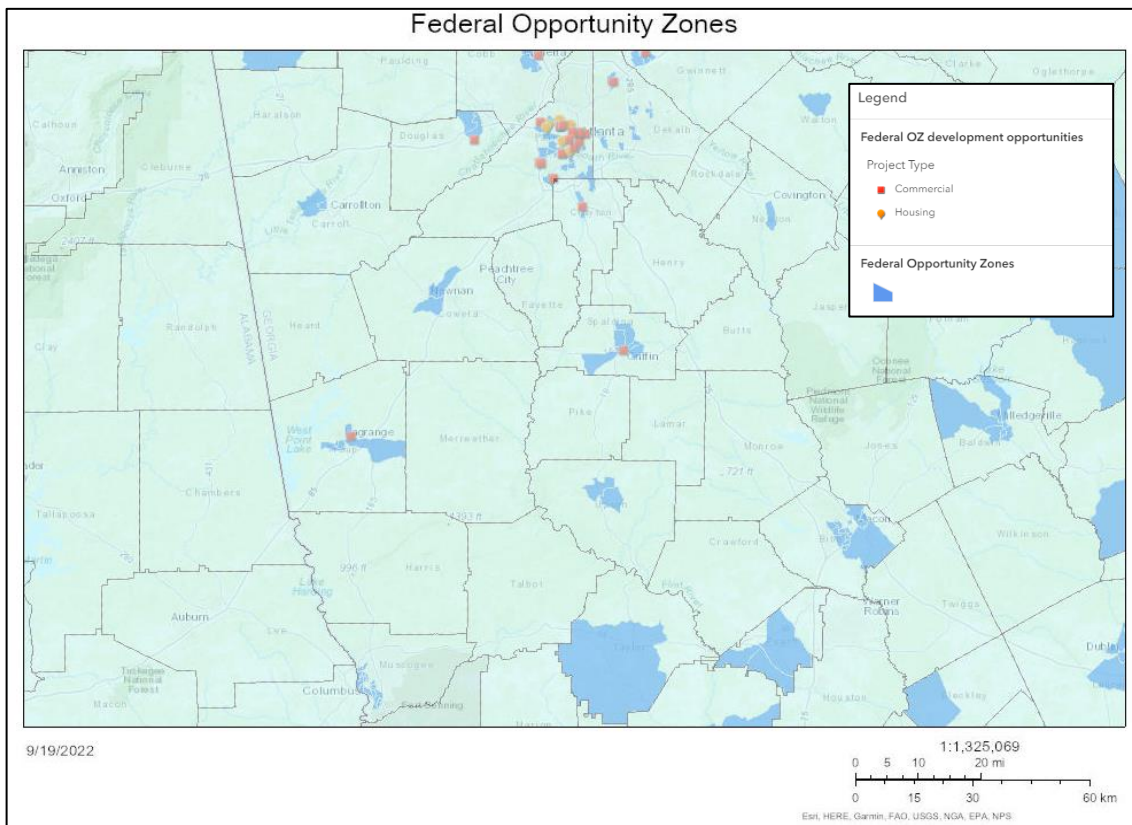
Entity and Project Info	Estimated Cost and Description	Responsible Party	Jobs Created
<p>Spalding County, City of Griffin Agricultural Industrial Park</p> <p>This project will extend infrastructure and grade industrial pads for the construction of a value-added agricultural industrial park which would include 200,000+ square foot commercial greenhouses for research, testing, and growing crops.</p>	<p>\$10,000,000</p>	<p>City of Griffin, University of Georgia</p>	<p>To Be Determined</p>
<p>Upson County: Business and Technology Park Infrastructure</p> <p>This project, currently under construction, will upgrade the wastewater infrastructure at the Central Georgia Business and Technology Park. A Transfer pipe is needed.</p>	<p>\$6,000,000</p>	<p>City of Thomaston and IDA</p>	<p>To Be Determined</p>

Opportunity Zones

Federal Opportunity Zones

A Federal Opportunity Zone is a federal economic development tool used in the region to improve outcomes in communities that have historically suffered disinvestment. These zones are designated in economically distressed communities where new investments, under certain conditions, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment. Local governments can qualify as Federal Opportunity Zones if they have been nominated for that designation by the state and that nomination has been certified by the Secretary of the U.S. Treasury via its delegation of authority to the Internal Revenue Service. These zones enable the region to incentivize public-private partnerships to make community wide economic impacts.

A total of five (5) counties in the TRRC region are designated as Federal Opportunity Zones: Carroll, Coweta, Spalding, Troup and Upson. These Opportunity Zones and an overview of each Census Tract’s socioeconomic data are shown in the following map and table.



Socioeconomic Data for Federal Opportunity Zones in the Region

Census Tract	County	Population	Labor Force	Per Capita Income	Poverty
9105.01	Carroll	8,648	4,805	\$14,655	35.5%
9105.02	Carroll	3,373	1,471	\$9,811	52.6%
1703.05	Coweta	11,079	5,494	\$21,772	27.3%
1706.01	Coweta	8,755	4,110	\$21,861	33.3%
1603.00	Spalding	3,384	1,327	\$16,661	38.7%
1604.00	Spalding	5,603	2,088	\$11,198	37.6%
1607.00	Spalding	7,658	3,013	\$15,411	27.5%
1608.00	Spalding	4,398	1,841	\$14,350	43.9%
1609.00	Spalding	2,592	1,124	\$16,343	26.7%
9605.01	Troup	5,028	2,323	\$19,196	29.5%
9606.00	Troup	5,546	2,270	\$17,531	28.5%
9608.00	Troup	3,763	1,783	\$11,759	45.9%
9609.01	Troup	4,483	2,110	\$15,389	20.9%
102.01	Upson	4,934	1,874	\$17,952	26.5%
105.00	Upson	4,895	2,389	\$20,943	21.9%

State Opportunity Zones

Local governments that undertake redevelopment and revitalization efforts in certain older commercial and industrial areas can now qualify those areas for the State of Georgia’s maximum job tax credit of \$3,500 per job. The incentive, which is available for new or existing businesses that create two or more jobs, is a Job Tax Credit which can be taken against the business’ Georgia income tax liability and payroll withholding tax. An additional incentive is that businesses of any nature can qualify, and not those just defined as a “business enterprise.” The credit is available for areas designated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) as a “State Opportunity Zone”. DCA will consider designations for areas that are within or adjacent to a census block group with 15% or greater poverty where an enterprise zone or urban redevelopment plan exists. Currently, the approved State Opportunity Zones in the Three Rivers EDD are located in the Cities of Griffin, LaGrange, and West Point.

Opportunity Zones: True Opportunities

As seen in the socioeconomic data, these zones contain many of the factors identified as weaknesses in the SWOT analysis, such as high levels of poverty, need for a highly trained workforce, and lack of affordable housing and living-wage jobs. These opportunity zones are true opportunities for local/regional stakeholders to invest in catalytic projects that will help these areas make progress toward the regional vision of equitable access to economic activity for every resident in the region. Each of the 5 counties has key partners that can collaborate to activate high-impact projects, including local chambers of commerce, development authorities, educational resources, and economic development leaders and champions that can bring opportunity to low-income communities.

Evaluation Framework

Performance Measures

Three Rivers Regional Commission staff will measure the success of CEDS goals and report outcomes to the TRRC Council, which serves as the CEDS Committee. Specific performance measures that may be used to measure success for identified goals are grouped according to the strategic categories used in the SWOT analysis and include the following:

Strategic Category	Example Performance Measures
Human Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Skills: Increase the number of students in career and technical education programs, including apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training programs. • Educational Attainment: Increase the number of residents that have high school diplomas • Human Services: Increase the number of programs that remove barriers to participation in workforce development.
Local Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism and Film Industry: Increase in tourism and visitor spending in the region. • Quality of Life: Number of projects completed aimed at improving quality of life amenities in the region. • Housing: Number of projects completed that increases or improves availability of workforce and senior housing.
Necessary Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial Properties: Increase in ready to develop industrial parks and speculative buildings. • Transportation: Number of projects completed that are critical for regional economic development. • High-Speed Internet: Increase coverage and accessibility of high-speed internet in Three Rivers region. • Traditional Infrastructure: Number of projects that provide or improve basic infrastructure.
Business Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of programs supporting business development in existing and emerging sectors, enhanced access to capital, a number of new or improved business centers that act as incubators and accelerators providing business development services and space.
<p>→ Additional performance measures may be added as this CEDS is implemented.</p>	

Report on Performance Measures

The following is a report on the performance measures for the period:

Human Factors

- **Workforce Skills: Increase the number of students in career and technical education programs, including apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training programs.**
 - The total number of youths involved in training programs during the year was 289. The total number of adults and dislocated workers involved in training programs was 319.
- **Educational Attainment: Increase the number of residents that have high school diplomas.**
 - The total number of high school graduates for the Three Rivers region is 5,151 and is broken down by entity as follows:

County	2022-2023 Graduates	County	2022-2023 Graduates
Butts	226 (83.1%)	Meriwether	116 (80%)
Carroll	928 (94.9%)	Pike	293 (95.4%)
Coweta	1705 (91.5%)	Spalding	593 (83.8%)
Heard	141 (94.0%)	Troup	788 (86.0%)
Lamar	186 (85.3%)	Upson	288 (87.9%)

Source: GDOE, Interactive Dashboard, K-12 Public School Report Card, 2022-2023

- **Human Services: Increase the number of programs that remove barriers to participation in the workforce development.**
 - The following training programs are provided by WorkSource Three Rivers that help to remove barriers to participation in the workforce development:
 - Customized Training (**0 participants**) - is designed to meet the special training needs of an employer or a group of employers by allowing them to tailor and design work-based skills training.
 - On-the-Job Training (**1 participants**) - provided by an employer in the public, private non-profit, or private sector to a paid participant while engaged in productive work train new employees for the specific job duties required by that employer.
 - Incumbent Worker Training (**0 participants**) - designed to improve the skills of employees and the competitiveness of an employer (including a group of

employers) to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees by assisting the workers in obtaining the skills necessary to maintain or retain employment or have the opportunity for increased earnings potential through promotion.

- Pre/Registered Apprenticeships (**0 participants**) - is an employer-driven training model that combines on-the-job training with job related instruction.
- Supportive Services (**124 participants**) - enable an individual to participate in activities such as, but not limited to, assistance with transportation, child care, housing, health care, educational testing, and work-related tools.
- Financial Literacy Education (**0 participants**) - provides youth with the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve long term financial stability. Financial literacy education encompasses information and activities on a range of topics, such as creating budgets; setting up checking and saving accounts; managing spending, credit, and debt; understanding credit reports and credit scores; and protecting against identify theft.
- Entrepreneurial Skills Training (**0 participants**) - provides the basics of starting and operating a small business. This training helps youth develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, such as the ability to take initiative, creatively seek out and identify business opportunities, develop budgets and forecast resource needs, understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option, and communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.
- Paid Work Experience (**11 participants**) - is structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace and provides youth with opportunities for career exploration and skill development. A work experience may take place in the private for-profit section, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Work experience for youth: summer employment and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training.
- Occupational Skills Training (**117 participants**) - is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels.
- GED and Alternative Secondary School (**73 participants**) - services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education. Dropout recovery

services are those that assist youth who have dropped out of school. Both types of services help youth to re-engage in education that leads to the completion of a recognized high school equivalent.

Necessary Infrastructure

- **Industrial Properties: Increase in ready to develop industrial parks and speculative buildings.**

County	Available Buildings	Available Land Sites	County	Available Buildings	Available Land Sites
Butts	6	5	Meriwether	1	0
Carroll	7	2	Pike	2	14
Coweta	14	35	Spalding	9	0
Heard	0	7	Troup	8	0
Lamar	2	0	Upson	5	1

Source: Georgia Site Selector Industrial Property Search – Searched December 2023

- **Transportation: Number of projects completed that are critical for regional economic development.**
 - On-demand public transit services are provided, as well as services coordinated with the Georgia Department of Human Services, in all ten counties in the region.
 - The Three Rivers Regional Commission participates in the I-75 Central Corridor Coalition to advocate for transportation improvements, including passenger rail, that will make this interstate more efficient for freight traffic, connect residents between Atlanta and Macon to employment and recreational opportunities, and make travel safer for vehicular users.
- **High-Speed Internet: Increase coverage and accessibility of high-speed internet in Three Rivers region.**
 - In Lamar County, Southern Rivers Energy celebrated a Fiber Network End of Build after completing a fiber optic network to all members of the electric cooperative to connect to, with currently a 40% penetration rate.

- **Traditional Infrastructure: Number of projects that provide or improve basic infrastructure.**
 - In Butts County, Flovilla began second phase of project to replace aged and extremely problematic water lines through the service area.
 - In Butts County, Jackson City Council approved a connector road in partnership with GDOT that will ease heavy truck traffic going through downtown.

Local Assets

- **Tourism and Film Industry: Increase in tourism and visitor spending in the region.**
 - Filming in the region has continued, such as Griffin, Senoia, and Jackson being the hosts for production activities.
 - Concord: Strickland Building is under new management, the city is promoting on the website and it is attracting a lot of events and attention to the historic center
 - Zebulon: rezoned a 58 property in preparation for a large recreational sports facility that will bring revenue to the city through sports tourism.

- **Quality of Life: Number of projects completed aimed at improving quality of life amenities in the region.**
 - In Meriwether County, voters renewed the education penny sales tax (ESPLOST) to continue to improve the county school to prepare scholars for education and employment opportunities.
 - Spalding County received over \$7 million in grants from the American Rescue Plan Act for parks and recreation improvements.
 - Thomaston received \$1.47 million in American Rescue Plan Act for improving and maintaining recreation facilities in the underserved Silverton area of the city.

- **Housing: Number of projects completed that increases or improves availability of workforce and senior housing.**

Business Environment

- **Improved Business Environment: Increase the number of programs supporting business development in existing and emerging sectors, enhanced access to capital, a number of new or improved business centers that act as incubators and accelerators providing business development services and space.**

- In Carroll County, Carroll Electric Membership Cooperative (EMC) hosted spring and fall agribusiness seminars to offer local farmers, business leaders and elected officials an opportunity to connect with one another to promote agriculture education among the cooperative's membership.
- The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) recently held an electric vehicle listening session at West Georgia Technical College's (WGTC) Callaway Conference Center in LaGrange. Leaders from Georgia's emerging electrification industry along with technical college administrators and faculty attended the session to discuss the future of electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing and the growing demand for a highly skilled workforce.